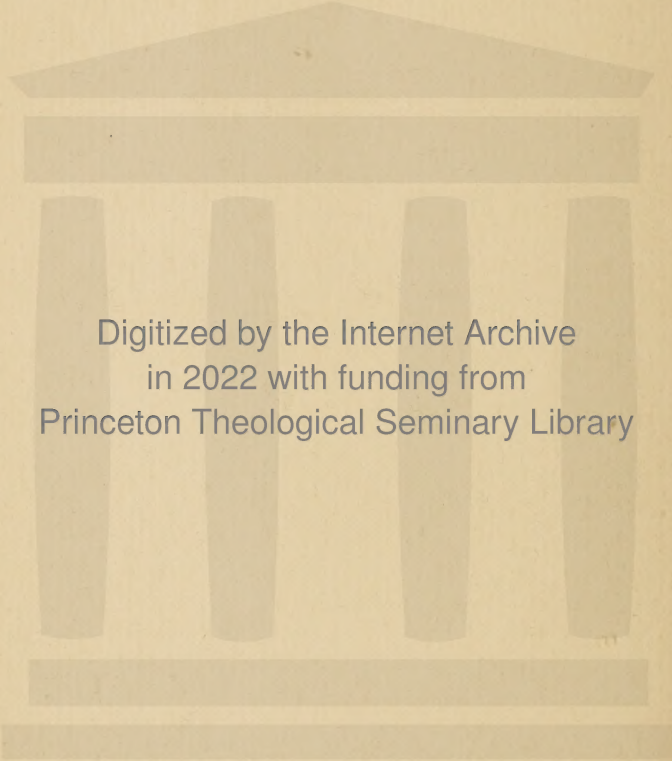


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THE HOLY SPIRIT  
AND  
CHRISTIAN SERVICE

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

A NEW ANALYSIS OF CONSCIENCE

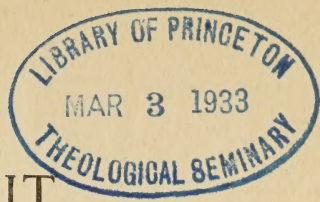
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"It is a book which shows very considerable originality and great independence and ingenuity of thought. Judging from it, the completed work may be expected to be a most methodical and almost exhaustive treatment of its subject, and one thoroughly scientific in spirit."—Professor FLINT, D.D., University of Edinburgh.

LONDON :

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PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD.



THE HOLY SPIRIT  
AND  
CHRISTIAN SERVICE

BY THE REV.

J. D. ROBERTSON, M.A., D.Sc.

NORTH BERWICK

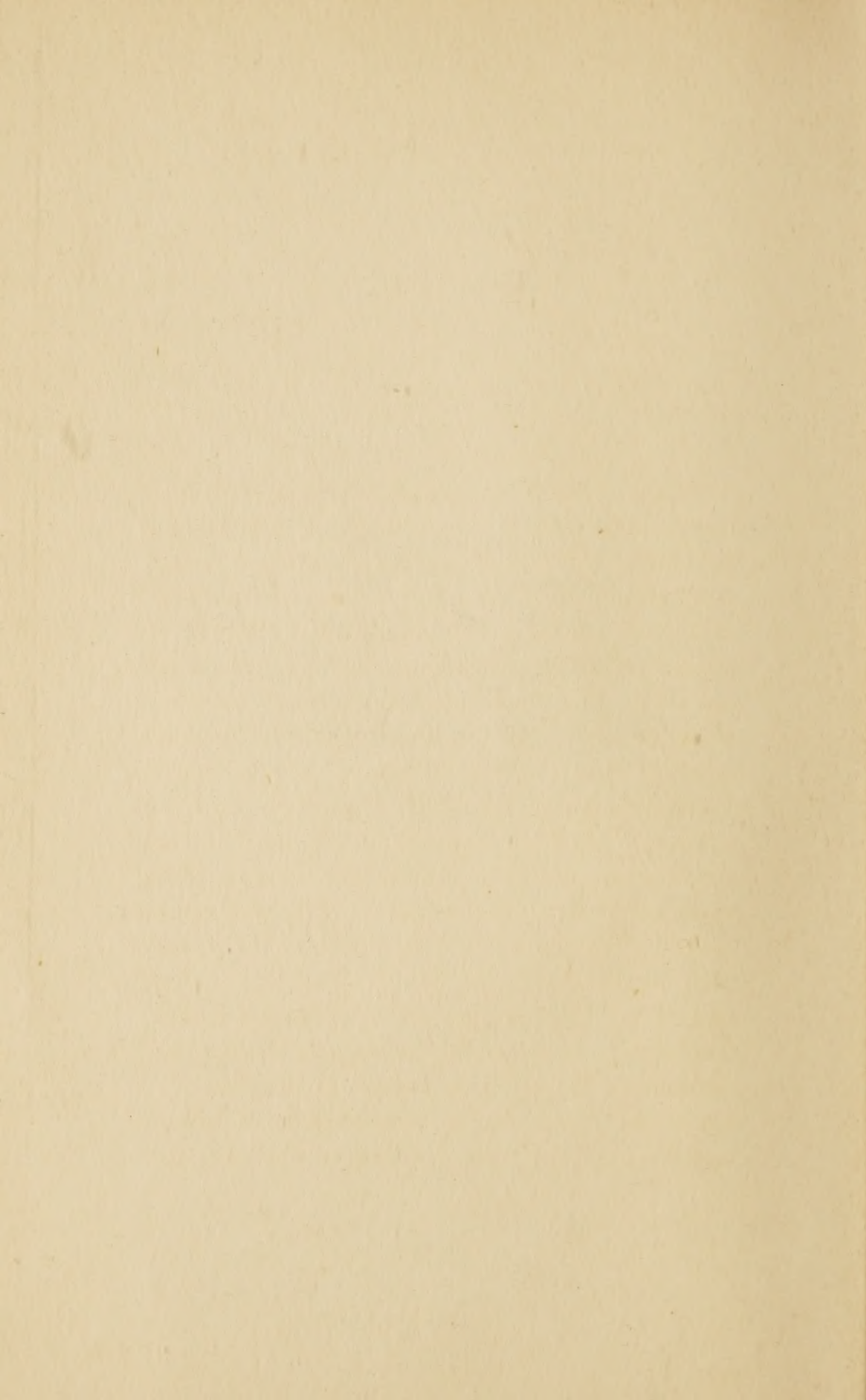
NEW YORK  
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY  
150 NASSAU STREET  
1901



S. T. COLERIDGE (*Aids to Reflection*) gives prominence to the following :—

“AND here it will not be impertinent to observe, that what the eldest Greek Philosophy entitled *The Reason* and *Ideas*, the philosophic Apostle names *The Spirit* and *Truths spiritually discerned*; while to those who in the pride of Learning, or in the overweening meanness of modern Metaphysics, decry the doctrine of the spirit in man, and its possible communion with the Holy Spirit, as *vulgar* enthusiasm, I submit the following sentences from a Pagan Philosopher, a Nobleman and a Minister of State :—‘ This I say, Lucilius, A HOLY SPIRIT ABIDES WITHIN US, the observer of our evil, the guardian of our good. Just as He has been drawn by us, so He Himself draws us. NO ONE IS A GOOD MAN WITHOUT GOD.’—SENECA.”

DEDICATED TO  
THE COMMITTEE AND STUDENTS OF  
THE C. W. T. INSTITUTE  
AND  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
THE LATE REV. PRINCIPAL CAIRNS, D.D., LL.D.





## P R E F A C E

THE substance of this book was delivered to a largely attended class in the Pillar Hall, Synod Buildings, Edinburgh, during the winter before last. The number of lectures has been doubled, and the whole has been revised in the interval.

We must say a few words of the constituency for which they were originally prepared. They were students of the Christian Workers' Training Institute under the auspices of the Edinburgh Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Some of the members had received the advantages of a University training ; the majority, however, had not. There was consequently great variety in their attainments. Home Mission Workers, Bible Women, District Visitors, and Tract Distributors were well represented. The young men, who are the hope of all churches, were also a characteristic feature of the class. A few older office-bearers and regular Christian workers from the congregations of the city gave

additional variety to the weekly gathering. No religious teacher could desire a more earnest and responsive audience. At the close, in accordance with their unanimous request, the lecturer willingly undertook to publish the lectures. It is always a pleasure to help those who are so eager to help others.

When the character of the auditory is considered, it will be seen that simplicity and directness of statement were of the first importance. Any elaborate system of reference to foreign theologians would have been out of place in the circumstances. This must be the Author's excuse for treating in a popular way subjects that fall within a systematic course of study in theology and ethics. The subject of the course was chosen solely with a view to the probable wants of Christian workers, and this has been the guiding principle in its treatment throughout. We do not regret the limitations thus imposed. It may be that they will contribute to widen the circle of those interested in the questions with which the lectures deal.

A work on the Holy Spirit in relation to Christian Service ought to be welcome just now. The subject is stirring many minds. Our young people in their Christian Endeavour Societies, and our older friends in conventions like those

---

associated with Keswick, are praying and working ardently for a deepening and quickening of spiritual life. Within all the Evangelical Churches there appear to be expectations of coming blessing. Assuredly there is need. If these published words contribute in the slightest degree towards this most desirable end, our pleasant labours will be abundantly rewarded. Prolonged meditation upon the subject has also been personally profitable to the Author. It has largely regenerated his preaching and reanimated his work. May some measure of the same blessing descend upon his readers.

Should this volume prove acceptable, it is our desire to take up next the subject of the Holy Spirit and Christian Theology. "The Spirit in Creation," or a statement and discussion of the Holy Spirit's doctrine of Creation in its relation to the natural science of the present day, may be published next year as one of a projected series.





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I

SERVICE—THE TRUE IDEA OF THE  
CHRISTIAN LIFE

B



# I

## SERVICE—THE TRUE IDEA OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

An ignorance of means may minister  
To greatness, but an ignorance of aims  
Makes it impossible to be great at all !

E. B. BROWNING.

DEAR FRIENDS — Your presence here amply guarantees the interest you take in Christian work, and your desire to know the best ways of promoting it. You are volunteer students snatching fragments of broken leisure to utilise them in the service of Christ, and I know that many of you could speak out of a fuller and richer experience than I can. But there may be some advantage in comparing my point of view with your own. If we can combine our impressions, it may be helpful to both. We trust that our taking counsel together may contribute to the increase of our common service for the Master, and the deepening of its spirit of consecration. May we learn to

accomplish more good by our work, and may we come to understand better its true nature. May our joy in it be multiplied, and may fountains of refreshment and renewal burst forth at our feet. May we be guided into the right way of preparing for larger and more self-sacrificing service, and may all clouds which come between our souls and God be either dispersed or changed into showers of blessing. Above all, may He of whom we speak be present, opening up the truth to us, and disposing our hearts to receive it, so that after each night of conference we shall return to our fields of service with a clearer vision and a stronger faith. Then shall the work of the Lord prosper in our hands, and God, even our God, will bless us. It is my earnest prayer that no shortcomings of mine may hinder your enjoyment of these blessings.

The subject of this course is Christian Service. That is our exclusive theme. But the work of the Holy Spirit is so involved in all service worthy of the name Christian, that we cannot separate the one from the other. It is to mark our sense of the utter impossibility of doing this that we have retained the two subjects together in the general title — “The Holy Spirit and Christian Service.” Either subject would be enough to occupy our thoughts, but we are

convinced that the latter cannot be profitably discussed apart from the former, for only those activities can be spoken of as Christian Service which the Holy Spirit uses for His own high ends. No acts of ours are really saving or serviceable in the Christian sense unless they are in some way the outcome of the Spirit's influence in the heart. We must try to keep the two subjects together in our minds as they are in reality, and we shall find that their mutual relations are so numerous and important as perfectly to warrant our concentrating attention upon them. Nevertheless, we fear that even with this restricted programme we shall have difficulty in completing it during the short time at our disposal. The materials for consideration far outrun the limits within which we must confine our investigation and discussion.

With these introductory explanations as to the scope and character of our united labours, we pass to the subject of the first lecture—"Service, the True Idea of the Christian Life."

On reading this heading, some who are intensely in earnest may be inclined to regard the lecture which follows as a species of trifling with a serious subject. They may say: "Is it not too late in the day to ask what is the true idea of the Christian life? Has it been left to the men



of this generation to discover it? Is it not pure presumption to imagine anything of the kind?"

To any one so speaking we answer that the confusion of opinion and practice in the world shows conclusively the need for such a question being raised at the present time.

As to the confusion of opinion, it cannot seem unnecessary to consider it if we take into account the extraordinary misunderstandings current in the minds of those who stand outside of all organisations for Church life and work. In books and magazines, in newspapers and casual conversation, we meet with unconscious but very flagrant misrepresentations of the Christian life. There are caricatures of its doctrine and perversions of its spirit. From Simon Magus to Hall Caine, we find the most contradictory conceptions on the subject.

It may seem unaccountable that after so many centuries of Christian life and work these misunderstandings should be possible, but in questions of religion and conduct there is really no limit to the powers of self-deception inherent in human nature. Theories spring into being to justify personal practice or predilection without much regard to their truth or harmony with fact. Passion and interest, habit and taste, give shape and colour to opinion even when they do not entirely control its formation.

In this case one can excuse some of these misconceptions. For within the bounds of the Christian world there exist many churches embodying different types of life under the name of the one religion common to all. Moreover, we do not profess to say how far the merely nominal Christianity of the Church as a whole is responsible for these erroneous ideas. Much of the guilt must lie at our own doors. These false views could never have obtained the currency they enjoy in the thought of the world had there not been countless multitudes living a semi-pagan life while they professed a Christian creed. In our marrying and giving in marriage, in our sinful idolatry of money, rank, and fashion, in our business relations and political activities, in our sacred insincerities, as well as in our social immoralities, we are more heathen than Christian.

Many professing Christians make the Christian life a *luxury*. That life shows itself in two forms—devotion and duty. As to the former, they attend church once a week (perhaps), take a languid interest in the sermon, and get some pleasure from the rest of the service, but do not allow its influence to reach conscience. Nay, they would fain have everything in it appeal to the senses or flatter the natural man. To please the eye the priest's robes must be gorgeous and

costly ; the music sensuous, tickling the ear rather than elevating the heart. Even the incense burned must be so prepared as to yield the most pleasing sensations to the worshippers. For these religious luxuries of the rich and fashionable, the poor have their substitutes in the form of sensationalism in the pulpit. This may not be so weakening to the conscience, but it is fraught with danger to reverence.

These are no doubt extreme forms of the fashionable faith which converts Christian devotion into a luxury, and it is hard sometimes to say where the worship of the spirit begins, and that of the senses ends ; but there is a distinction, founded upon a difference which may be vital to the worshipper. Without judging any man, we can safely say, that such acts of worship are either indifferent to what is specifically Christian, or but loosely and casually connected with it. They are not derived from the Gospels, but are survivals of some of the religious features of Greek or Roman paganism under the form of Christianity. Their primary end is to excite or soothe the sensibilities rather than to change or uplift the heart. They do not bring the worshipper into the immediate presence of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, they bring the spirit of Epicureanism into the innermost centre of man's being and willing.

What can be said of the active life of duty which is fed from such shallow and tainted springs of devotion? Is it anything more than a form of decent selfishness and sober worldliness? Does it not ignore all that is distinctively Christian in the teaching and example of Christ? Does it not, under one disguise or another, make the animal life and its pleasure the actual standard of right and duty in action? Where is there room for repentance in a life which is devoid of any sense of sin deeper than that of a domesticated dog? How can it believe in dying to live, when it has no interest in any life but the present? Are not its very self-sacrifices the last refinements of a "judicious luxury"? Lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, lovers of self, how can they be lovers of God or man? Does not the whole life and death of the Founder of the religion they profess run counter to the spirit and purpose of their lives? We read of the French court listening to the celebrated preacher Bourdillon. The men wept, the ladies became hysterical, but on the evening of the same day they adjourned in a body to the Opera. For these and all such experts in the science and art of living, the religious life is a luxury. But can we call it Christian by any stretch of charity?

At the opposite extreme stands the idea of the



Christian life as a kind of *penance*—mortification of the body for the sanctification of the soul. The classic example of this type is Simeon called Stylites, standing for ever on his pillar. This is a nobler theory of life than the preceding one. It has had at times a certain relative justification over against the easy self-indulgence and gross sensualism of general society, and it has in consequence held a striking place and exercised a strange power in the history of Christianity. In our own day and generation, Mr. Gladstone would appear to lend it his support. For in writing to Mr. Hope Scott of Abbotsford he recommended that every day one should of set purpose do something to mortify the flesh for the good of the soul.

But can we for a moment accept this as the central idea of the Christian life? Do we not expect it to be something more sane and spiritual as well as larger and more productive? This conception of life as a penitential discipline is not chargeable with all the one-sided and extravagant results to which it has led in some minds, but apart from these morbid developments there is grave reason for doubting its truth. Does it not exalt in an arbitrary way the human as compared with the divine activity in the work of sanctification? Is it not liable to generate the subtle poison of spiritual pride, so fatal to all that is

sweetest and best in the life of the heart? Moreover, what sort of redemption is that likely to be which is so largely the fruit of the individual's own willing? Are not favourite sins often found to survive the most elaborate forms of self-mortification? May not leanness of soul be found along with a mortifying leanness of body? Can self-imposed crosses ever serve the highest ends of the Christian life?

We are the more confirmed in our objection to this idea of the Christian life when we remember that it had not its origin in Christianity. It was brought into it either from some school of philosophy in the West, or caught by infection from the practices common to certain forms of Oriental paganism. Probably its roots have to be traced to tendencies that are universal in human nature under the pressure of distorted conceptions of the supernatural. Would not the foolish Fakir, staring fixedly for years at the tip of his own nose, have a claim to be regarded as unconsciously Christian, if this theory of that life were accepted as true?

In opposition to both of these views, we maintain that the Christian life is neither a luxury nor a penance, but a service. It is the use of our life for the greater glory of God and the higher good of men. Neither pleasure nor self-sacrifice can be

the supreme end, though both may be indispensable to its attainment. Certainly both enter into every true form of Christian service. In so far as they do, they must be presumed to be pleasures or sacrifices ministering to the birth or growth of the spiritual nature rather than to the gratification of the flesh. But even then it does not follow that for this end we are to impose upon ourselves crosses of our own making. If we are doing the will of God and following Christ faithfully, we shall encounter enough of self-denial in the way of service and in keeping ourselves in fit condition for it. Ascetic practices, in their time and place, do purify and strengthen the will, and are therefore useful as means to ends that are higher than themselves ; but sacrifice or pleasure for its own sake is not included in the main idea of the Christian life. The spirit of that life teaches us that both should be met with in the service of others rather than in the interests of self. Pleasure or sacrifice must not be followed at the bidding of blind instincts, but as subordinate to service.

If the Christian life is a service, whom do we serve in it? Is it God or man? The service of man is the true and exclusive end of that Religion of Humanity which claims to take the place of the Religion of Christ. It makes man, his interests and wants, the object of all effort, and

proudly proclaims itself the Bringer-in of a Kingdom of Man as opposed to the old-time Kingdom of God. It says: Let us live for others, and consider their elevation or consolation the highest service upon which we can enter, and the true end of all religion that really understands itself.

In so far as this system poses as a religion,—destined, in the interests of human progress, to supersede Christianity,—we have to deal in a few words with its idea of service. Two points only call for attention in this reference. Does it gauge the wants of man thoroughly? Has it resources within itself for meeting them, and so serving humanity better?

This modern religion certainly admits that human nature is ill equipped for the work it has to do in the world, but it also sees in the nature of man endless possibilities of modification and improvement. The human animal is a pitifully defective creature—the will weak, the conscience unenlightened, and the heart frequently miserable and forlorn; but these evils are largely curable, and the Positivist Religion deliberately sets itself to the task of curing them.

What are its plans and resources for this work? “The strengthening of the social or sympathetic tendencies of man at the expense of the personal or selfish”—this is its way of regeneration and



redemption. To effect this it has as leverage no belief in God or a future existence as ordinarily understood. It repudiates moral freedom as a pestilent heresy. Yet for each of these it has substitutes. Instead of the worship of God, it enforces the worship of humanity—"the real author of the benefits for which thanks were formerly given to God." It thus exalts man to the extent of deifying him—at least in the person of the best representatives—and thereby finds room for many of the religious affections. Reverence towards those who are above us, Love for our equals, and Benevolence for those who are in need of our help are all provided for. Instead of a future life, it strenuously preaches the solidarity of our race, and strives to enlarge and vivify the current conceptions of posthumous influence. The good men do live after them. This should be enough to satisfy the purified desire for immortality. For moral freedom, it gives us the permanent possibility of improvement in the lot of man.

We have not to estimate the worth or criticise the effectiveness of these beliefs as regenerative forces, we have only to institute a passing comparison of them with those of Christianity, in so far as they claim to offer higher and better ideas of service for him who seeks to live the religious life.

Christianity differentiates itself from this Religion of Humanity at the outset. It maintains that men are even now living in an invisible moral and spiritual world, where their chief troubles and deliverances are to be found. Have they dangerous temptations through the flesh? Then they must seek safety not alone and not chiefly in flesh and blood, but in the power of the living God. Do they often become a prey to bodily weakness and finally succumb to the death which overtakes all? Then they must have recourse to the help and consolation of the Invisible, as well as to support from the visible world. Do they encounter difficulties in the conduct of their lives? Then they have to fall back upon the belief in an over-ruling Providence—

A divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will.

Thus the service which Christianity enables its followers to render covers the invisible as well as the visible world—the future as well as the present phase of existence. Differing in its diagnosis of the malady from which men suffer, it differs also in the character of the remedy it prescribes. The Religion of Humanity sees only weakness and defect, animal selfishness and brutality, at the root of man's misery. Christianity goes deeper. It traces the worst sting in sorrow and the most

bitter ingredient in failure to invisible rather than visible causes—to the moral and spiritual rather than to the organic and physical nature of man. The ultimate root, it says, is sin—the inborn tendency to run counter to the God-given laws of our being. Consequently, instead of placing its whole strength in the service of man within external and material relations, it includes those which are internal and spiritual. Christianity, if it be true to itself, cannot neglect moral and social reform. But it must hold, at the same time, that the highest and most enduring service a man can render to his fellows is not the multiplication of agreeable sensations, or the amelioration of environment, but the deliverance of him from that ever-present thwarting and corrupting power which theologians characterise as sin.

We therefore see that the Christian faith provides a wider and higher field of service than the Religion of Humanity. The latter confines itself to the present and the proximate, the social and the moral. While not unduly subordinating these, the gospel of the Kingdom of God extends its province to the future and the ultimate, to the spiritual and the immortal interests of men as it interprets them. In its view the service of God and the service of man are not opposed or even entirely separable. The one is necessary to the

other. If so, do we gain anything in the definition of service by the Religion of Humanity which we do not already possess in the Religion of Christ? As far as we can see, no new element is introduced, and the advances made in the conception of humanitarian and social remedies were in spirit anticipated by the Gospel. On the other hand, we must be excused for thinking that a religion which seeks to regenerate man without the help of God or the hope of immortality is foredoomed to failure; and we must continue to advocate the Christian life, not merely as an aid and guide to self-improvement, but as the best available means for the development and evolution of the better nature in man.

It is our earnest conviction that the Positivist antithesis between the service of God and the service of man is false. They are united in the service of Christ. The work of Jesus ever tended to the progress and elevation of men. It has been described by Matthew Arnold as the greatest stroke for human happiness ever made. But we are not to empty Christ's words and acts of their original spiritual and saving power. We are to be loyal, not only to His ideals, but to His methods of realising them. We are to work from within outwards, rather than from the surface to the centre. We are to strive after



clean homes and sanitary environments, but we are not to leave the heart uncleansed and the envioning God unknown and unreverenced. We are to put Christ in the centre of Christian service as well as in the centre of all true living. We are to make Christ "the motive, the pattern, and the power," and the Holy Spirit the inspiration and the efficient Helper in the efforts we put forth for the greater glory of God and the higher good of men.

But you will ask in wonderment if Christians, in addition to their own callings, are expected to take upon themselves the burdens and obligations of Christian service. Have they not enough of their own? Are they to have imposed upon them a share in the Titanic labours and sufferings of Jesus Christ? Is not this an interference with the freedom wherewith Christ has made them free?

Our answer to such inquiries is: We must in our measure be as Christ was. The inspired description of Him as a Worker is: He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (St. Mark x. 45). The idea of service is therefore so interwoven with the conception of a Christian that we cannot think of the one without the other. It is not an open question whether or not you

shall serve God and man for Christ's sake. It is your duty. It is the use of your life, which the Father meant you to make in creating, the Son in redeeming, and the Holy Spirit in sanctifying it.

In our day Christians are too much like other men. They live with their class, they mix with their equals, and as a consequence find their own feelings reproduced, their tastes confirmed, their inclinations justified, and their judgments defended. They too often miss the perfection to which God is calling them through service of others for Christ's sake. They do not often come into spiritual contact with the world's sin and misery. The depths, the darkness, and the bitterness of sin are never faced in the spirit of Jesus.

What is the result? The weak pine and the sinful perish for want of the succour which we should give them as Christ's servants, the Christian Church is paralysed, Christianity discredited, and its ministries mocked and scorned by the world. A Socialism, materialistic in its principles and superficial in its policy, strives to take the place of the Gospel. Even where the Church succeeds in leavening the middle classes, it leaves the lower strata of society unsaved and unblessed. Men are asking, with grave doubts in their heart, whether Christ can be the Saviour of Society, and

the Founder of a Kingdom of God destined to include all interests and all classes. Never before was there so intense a feeling of the world's misery, never so hopeful a disposition to believe that it is curable. You know that the Gospel undertakes to regenerate the whole of humanity. Can it fulfil this vast ideal? Can it realise the great hopes to which it has given birth?

Christian men and women, it is for you to give part of the answer to that question. It is for you, in whom the Church is at this moment partially embodied—it is for you to show that the Saviour can give the world that which it most sorely needs. This you can do, not by argument, but by active effort. It is work that tells. It is work that accomplishes the greatest results—not words. Work well done will repeat itself in a thousand unexpected ways. Therefore, to the work, to the work! And may God, the greatest worker, bless you and help you, and crown your efforts with success.

II

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SERVICE





## II

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SERVICE

God for His service needeth not proud work of human skill ;  
They please Him best who labour most to do in peace His will.

WORDSWORTH.

IN the first lecture of this course we began by drawing attention to the intimate relations which should exist between the Holy Spirit and Christian service. We had the feeling of those who were seeking to recover a forgotten article of belief. This truth, which it is the main object of our speaking here to revive, has been called "a lost gospel," so completely has it sunk out of the living consciousness of the Church. There are, alas ! many evidences of this. These we cannot wait to enumerate. Beyond a doubt much of our feebleness and failure in God's service spring from the common ignoring of the necessary part which He should have in it. For the same reason also, we find leading Christian teachers describing the Holy Spirit as a "thin, shadowy effluence,

proceeding from the Father and Son, as the breath proceeds from the human body." These things would have been impossibilities if we had given this doctrine the same place in our living beliefs which it had in the minds of the first founders of the Christian Church. It is a vague conviction of this kind that has evoked the cry, happily beginning to be popular in certain circles of the Church, "Back to Pentecost! Back to Pentecost!" It might be wiser if we strove to bring Pentecost down into the present, by making more room for the Holy Spirit's co-operation in our work. Then we should have an experience similar to that of the disciples immediately after the Resurrection. We should have a new and abundant coming of the Holy Spirit into our midst, a more abiding experience of His presence in each, and a consequent increase in the power of all to work for their risen Master.

But it may be asked: How can the Holy Spirit co-operate with us in service? How can an infinite and omnipotent mind and will act in and through us without destroying our responsibility and freedom? Are we to be mere passive subjects used by Him, controlled by Him, and deriving all our life and power from Him? If so, would not this be to take away the glory of serving Him? Is not the chief value of our homage and obedience to be found in the fact

that it is rendered freely and willingly, rather than of constraint? Would it not be robbing man of the peculiar attributes which belong to him, as made in the Divine image, if we thus make him an instrument in the hands of a Divine agent?

Ah, my friends! these ideas are foreign to the life and activity that are the result of God's union with man's efforts through the Holy Spirit. We cannot bring the analogies that are connected with mechanical action in the outward world into this higher sphere of spiritual freedom. As well might we expect that God would make the fields fertile by preaching to them, or the flowers grow by singing to them. The means used must be appropriate to the effects which it is sought to produce. And if mind is to act upon mind, it will not be through forces of a material kind, or agencies like those which are at work in nature. We influence our fellows in a thousand ways that are more subtle and persuasive than mere physical contact or compulsion; and so it is with God in relation to us. He communicates impulses and inspirations, intuitions and desires, in the light of which alone our work for Him among men can be rightly carried through. Nay, just as with the poet or the painter, and the inspirations of his genius, we do our best work when we yield to Divine intimations, instead of following our own poorer and meaner wisdom.

Moreover, if communion with a larger mind and heart often unseals fountains of thought and feeling, may not the Holy Spirit awaken new powers and reveal new possibilities. Heights become visible, and depths we never sounded are fathomed by the light that dawns from above. We get strength for duty and temptation, difficulty and trial, through fellowship with men; shall we not be incomparably more helped by the higher fellowship with God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. Here, if anywhere, we find the secret springs of sacred endeavour and spiritual service. In alliance with God, all things are possible; without Him we can do nothing.

Therefore we are none of us asked to work in our own strength or wisdom, nay, we are expressly forbidden to do so. We could not stand before men, and urge them to enter upon a new life, were we not fully conscious that above them and within them there is One who pleads more effectually than we can do. After all, the Holy Spirit is the great worker, without whom no heart can be changed and no character renewed, purified, and ennobled.

Some aspects of this Divine co-operation are illustrated by what you find in other spheres. In all the work of the world, behind the feeble efforts of men, there is the almighty power of

God. Every human occupation depends upon one or more of the forces of nature for its efficiency. The telegraphic operator would be useless without electricity; the sailor counts upon the forces of the wind, or the stored-up energy of the sun, if he is to bring his vessel into port; the farmer avails himself of the frosts of winter, as well as the sunshine of summer and the showers of spring, if he is to secure a harvest. The healer of men's bodies counts upon the presence of curative forces which were at work before him, and will be after him. The merchant and the statesman utilise social forces in the prosecution of their vast and varied enterprises. Have Christian workers no resources outside themselves, no spiritual forces which they can rely upon, no energies and influences more in-reaching than their own? Surely that would be an anomaly, if all the lower kinds of labour were provided for by God, but this highest order of activity were left unsupported.

Many of you will feel irritated by such a suggestion, and some will condemn these analogies as shockingly imperfect. So they are, we admit. For we have not only forces to work with, but a Person in whom these forces are all summed up, centralised, and made more completely available for us. He has all the considerateness, freedom, power of determination and adaptation that we



supremely need. He has all the interest in the work that we have, and infinitely more. He has all the power that we lack, all the initiation and wisdom that are so often absent from our efforts to serve Him. To whom then can we go in the first and the last resort but to Him? As we have seen, it is the very greatness and holiness of the Helper, and the littleness and unworthiness of the helped, that give rise to difficulties in thought as to our working with Him. These it would be out of place to attempt to resolve here. They belong to other studies, and can be better dealt with there.

What we have chiefly to remember is that the Holy Spirit not only co-operates with us in Christian service, but His is also the sole and exclusive right to administer our activities. Since Pentecost He has taken the place of rule within the Kingdom of God. He has come down into human life in room of the ascended Redeemer. To Him has been committed the supreme control in the affairs of the Kingdom. His oversight and direction extend to the minutest details of its ordained life. He is the rightful sovereign to whom all workers should be subject. In harmony with His will, all Christian work should be undertaken and completed. When He is recognised, and our dependence upon Him acknowledged,

there will be blessing. When He is ignored or thwarted, it is the beginning of barrenness and misrule. We must accept these relations to Him as the A B C of all Christian service worthy of the name.

What is the practical conclusion from these principles? Is it not that as workers we have to put ourselves wholly in the hands of the Holy Spirit? That may not be always easy to do, for we have all much of the old Adam clinging to us. But that that ought to be the relation between us and Him there can be no question to the sincere Christian mind and the upright Christian heart. You are to allow Him to work with, and in, and through you. The obedience must be unconditional if He is to own and further your work.

The necessity for this self-surrender may be made plainer by a simple and homely illustration. If we are working with any instrument, we require that it should be wholly subservient to our purpose. Let us suppose for a moment that the pencil with which we write became animated and came to have a will of its own. If then it persisted in going up or down, or contrary to the way we were endeavouring to lead it, how could we continue to use it? We wish to trace with it certain characters containing an intelligent meaning

and message ; but if it refuses and goes its own way, its utility would be at an end. Some other means for effecting our purpose would require to be taken, and we should discard the animated but disobedient pencil. If, to change the figure, it is a horse which we wish to ride, we all know that it requires to be broken in, trained, and made obedient, before it can be of much use. This last is true even of strong-willed children, if they are to grow up to be useful in the Church and in the world.

Is it otherwise with us in relation to the Holy Spirit ? We must be broken, subdued, moralised, and spiritualised, before He can work with us for the highest ends of the Kingdom.

The opposition to this view in Christian minds springs either from a wrong idea of the Holy Spirit, or erroneous and narrow notions as to the ways in which He helps us, and makes His will known to us. In regard to both of these there are innumerable and obstinate misconceptions requiring to be removed.

The Holy Spirit is God in us, striving to realise the ends and complete the work for which Christ was sent into the world. To be disobedient to Him is to be disobedient to God, and there are none of you who would deny the sin and futility of that.

The chief reasons why this is not clearly and finally apprehended are connected with the erroneous and narrow views held as to the way in which He helps us and manifests His will to us in service. These, we hope, the lectures that follow may do something to correct. But we may say now that there can be no doubt from the testimony of Revelation and experience, that the co-operation of the Holy Spirit with us in service is mediate as well as immediate, indirect as well as direct. His mediate and indirect working may be through the circumstances in which we have been placed, the faculties with which we have been entrusted, and the special spiritual gifts which He has distributed to us for our particular work in life.

In other words, in working with us the Holy Spirit makes use of means.

For example, do we need His guidance in our work? We may get it through believing prayer. Try this means of grace and the Holy Spirit will assuredly fulfil His office, and lead you into all duty as well as into all truth.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

But He requires that we should use the means

He has ordained if we are to receive the grace He has promised. When the atmosphere of the soul is purified by devotion, He will make the highest meaning of life plain. You will then learn that He can communicate with you through the inward eye and the spiritual ear, as well as co-operate with you through the outstretched hand of Faith.

If these means fail, there are others you can use for getting His guidance in service. The Scriptures are full of the will of God for you. Is there no law in them to direct you? If so, are you obeying it? Is there no principle applicable to your case? Live in the Spirit which inspires the Scriptures with their peculiar power, and they will divulge the deepest secret of the Divine mind for your guidance.

Above all, look to the Saviour everywhere so visible in Holy Writ. Put aside for the moment the Divine Christ. Ask what the human Jesus would do in your position. Which course would he choose? Then, do as he would do were he in your place.

Moreover, there are your circumstances, your Church, and the Christian friends in whose disinterested affection and practical wisdom you trust. Through all these and a hundred other channels the Holy Spirit may make known His will for



you. These are all parts of the Providential ordering of your life, and the guidance that comes through them should not lightly be set aside.

Nor must you leave out of account the faculties and powers with which God has endowed you. It would be a poor compliment to your Creator if you undervalued the message which they bring you from Him. It would be stark atheism to discard the light that comes through these and the exercise of your native powers of reason and judgment.

But after all use of right means in your search for guidance, you must not exclude the possibility of direct and immediate action of the Holy Spirit upon your mind and heart. Belief in its reality may require to be tempered and tested by sanctified common sense lest it should lead you into one-sidedness and a foolish fanaticism. But after every deduction and every allowance for God's co-operation with us through secondary causes, it remains profoundly and unalterably true that the final decision ought to be reached in accordance with the mind and will of the Spirit active within you. God knows you better than you know yourself. He also loves you ; and as a proof of His love He desires to regulate even the details of your life if you will allow Him. His, then, is the light in which you should interpret every other indication

of His will for you. When all these guiding influences combine and harmonise, their united testimony should be decisive in all ordinary circumstances. If not, then you must be content to wait. It was a great principle in Christ's life: "Mine hour is not yet come." May it not also be so with you in regard to the new course upon which you propose to enter.

If the Holy Spirit can thus co-operate with you in such a variety of ways while you are seeking His guidance, may not His help in other directions be equally varied as to the means through which it reaches you. If this be so, is it not evident that your right relation to Him is that of genuine dependence upon His power and sincere obedience to His will.

No doubt there have been perversions of this principle, but in itself it is thoroughly sound and good.

Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours to make them Thine.

Our so-called natural freedom is that of caged birds. The enviring cage is not all ; there is the bird-lime of sin upon all the perches.

Natural needs to be changed to moral freedom if it is to be real. When that has taken place, and the soul is cleansed from sin and sanctified by the Spirit, then our powers of moral choice and

self-determination are changed and become allies—humble allies and co-partners with the mighty God.

Thereafter, the fuller our dependence upon Him, the greater will be our independence of the world, and the more will our freedom be a living reality. We never lose what we give to God, either in the moral or in the material sphere. The coin of earth is changed into the currency of heaven, and a false liberty is exchanged for the true.

The blind obedience of the Jesuits to their Head—embodied in the famous maxim "*Proinde cadaver*"—is but a sorry parody of the true relation of every worker to the Holy Spirit. Bad as it is, and evil as its fruits have been for the most part, yet the early and startling success of this Order showed that the founders had got hold of a right principle, though by the wrong end.

Lastly, you must not imagine that this relation to the Holy Spirit can be wholly passive.

It is not passive, for it is never taken up nor maintained without frequent and repeated effort on our part. The first decision for Christ is sorely against the grain of our nature, and every subsequent step upwards to a higher and higher life is apt to be through strain and stress. It must chafe against, if it does not trample upon,

your love of power or pleasure, praise or popularity, honour or ease, money or personal advancement. We are not carried up to heaven upon beds of eider-down.

In conclusion, are we speaking to any who have resisted the Holy Spirit, and in so doing have missed their first vocation? You have taken the low instead of the high road in life, and you are not filling the place nor doing the work which God meant for you. Do not despair. If the highest and best is now beyond you, there is still some good thing appointed for you in the Divine counsels. Out of evil God can bring good; out of the worst, He sometimes brings the best; and although you can be no longer all that you might have been, or do all that you might have done, God will yet use you and your experience in a service open to no other, and for a purpose higher than you ever dream of.

### III

## THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DISTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT GIFTS FOR SERVICE





### III

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So works the All-wise ! our services dividing  
Not as we ask ;  
For the world's profit, by our gifts deciding  
Our duty-task. NEWMAN.

IN our first lecture we saw that, according to the Christian idea, our life is neither a luxury nor a penance, but a spiritual service. As service, it includes work for God among men, as well as worship. In Christianity the service of God is also the service of men. But it is not that service of man which the Religion of Humanity exacts from its disciples. It is not limited to their material and social well-being. In Christ we are called to be fellow-workers with God in the regeneration of the whole nature of man.

In the second lecture we saw that we have the co-operation of the Holy Spirit in this great work. He is the real worker ; we are the instruments, the persons whom He uses. Hence our obedience

to Him should be unconditional, if He is to acknowledge the work. Furthermore, His co-operation is of two kinds—mediate and immediate, indirect and direct. In this and the following lecture we have chiefly to speak of His mediate co-operation through our gifts and our circumstances.

For Christian service we have been blessed by the Holy Spirit with gifts, and to-night we are to consider the nature, distribution, and purpose of these. With a view to this we shall ask and answer three questions:—

1. What are the gifts which have been distributed among us?

2. Why is there so much variety in their distribution?

3. By what principle are we to estimate their value?

1. What are the gifts which have been distributed among us?

As a preliminary, we have to ascertain what are gifts. In one sense, everything is a gift which we have not made, bought, or earned for ourselves. When we further ask where gifts come from, we have to answer that ultimately every blessing we possess is the gift of God the Father. We have nothing which we did not receive from Him. Our bodies, our souls, our life and the means of

living, our endowments and possessions, all come from His hand. The very food we eat is the outcome of His beneficence. The tiller of the soil may sow the grain, the miller grind it, the baker prepare it for use, but the creative part of the work is done by God. He gives the increase; He made the earth and the air; He sent the sunshine and the rain. To His goodness, therefore, we owe our food. It is His gift. In like manner the higher endowments of the mind are from Him. No one would ever be so foolish as to imagine that he bestowed them upon himself. Nor can they have come from the flesh and blood of our bodies. They have been begotten in us by the creative Spirit of God. And if all these things have been given, it is that by their means we might live our lives and do our work.

Nevertheless, by gifts, in this connection, we mean something over and above these common blessings and essential requisites of a human life—something which enables us to live that life better, and more powerfully to advance the interests of God's kingdom in the world. Gifts of this order are of two kinds—natural and spiritual. Let us look first at those which are natural.

What is a natural gift? It is any *distinctive* power of mind or heart or will, any superiority of

position or opportunity which can be used by the Holy Spirit in Christian service. Of natural gifts we at once see that some are internal, others external. Internal gifts are a part of our nature ; external gifts arise out of our circumstances. The former have their seat within us ; the latter spring from comparatively outward conditions and relations. Exceptional health or strength, wealth, or social influence, are examples of external gifts ; natural eloquence or energy, tact, or amiability, are internal.

Higher than these, and with more immediate reference to Christian service, we have spiritual gifts. But you must remember that it is not always easy to distinguish between what is natural and spiritual in gifts. There is 'no fixed and immovable line of demarcation. As the worker is, so are his gifts. When he experiences a change of heart, and becomes a genuine and decided follower of Jesus, he carries his natural faculties with him, whatever they are. As he changes, they are changed. As he becomes sanctified and devotes his life to spiritual purposes, they share in the consecration. The strong memory which makes the past live over again, the vivid imagination which makes the future glorious, get a baptism of the Spirit and are applied to spiritual objects. Even external gifts

are lifted up to the same spiritual level when they are lovingly used in the service of God. It is often wonderful how many results of the most blessed character follow the wise use of wealth or social influence in the interests of the Kingdom of God.

But the exercise of undoubtedly spiritual gifts is that which is fruitful of the highest order of blessing, and we have to ask ourselves what these are. They are so numerous and varied that we can never hope to name them all. No exhaustive list of them can be given. Even that of Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians is notable, not so much because of the fulness of its contents, as for its representative character. Every one of the gifts he mentions is typical. If we found the word of wisdom among ourselves, we should understand how appropriately it stands where it does—at the head of the list. For it was used to characterise the Christian worker who had an eminent power of apprehending revealed truth about God and man and their relations in Christ, and who could also bring this to bear upon the practical life of others through the persuasive use of speech. That is unquestionably a supreme gift for service at all times in the Kingdom. Springing from the heart rather than from the head, it empowered him who possessed it to point



out what was best both in life and doctrine. Second to it Paul ranks the word of knowledge. It is not less indispensable to us than it was to the first Apostles. For it is a gift of speech arising primarily out of personal experience of spiritual realities. As such, it is always in demand. But it implied also a knowledge of men, their nature and life, their spirit and surroundings. When these two qualifications met in one man, they fitted him both for convincing of sin and building up in righteousness. As to the next, you may say: We do not prophesy now! That gift is not part of the equipment of a Christian worker. We are not so sure of that. For by prophesying here is not meant predicting the future. It is a kind of inspired preaching—a process of planting new ideals in men's hearts through the power of an original vision of moral and spiritual truth—backed by great earnestness of manner and life. Is not this as necessary now as ever it was? Is it not one of the crying wants of our time? Amid millions of echoes, where are the voices? In a multitude of preachers, how few have the mantle of the prophet. The reason of this in our day is connected with the lack of the next gift, that of faith. For that was more than a species of the common trust in God. It was a gift of the Spirit—special and individual—which

stimulated and quickened all those powers of the mind and heart which make God and the unseen world real—palpable to living, breathing, active men and women. The other gifts of governing ability and general helpfulness we have in a degree more proportional to our need. We do not say this because they are of minor importance, but simply because the conditions of modern life have developed them to an extent unparalleled even in the few great civilisations of the ancient world.

But you will say: Surely the other five gifts specified by St. Paul have no bearing upon those which are needed for Christian service now? Were they not eccentric outbreaks of spiritual life and power—puzzling to us rather than helpful and suggestive? Are they not out of sympathy with the habits, and alien to the thoughts of our more scientific generation? We cannot altogether agree with this view. The gifts of healing and miracle-working, the discerning of the spirits, the speaking with tongues and the interpretation of them, were gifts constituting a significant, if a minor, part of the living force of the primitive Church in the formative period of its history, and they are not so utterly foreign to our modern modes of action as they seem at first sight. Strip them of what was, to some extent, local and

temporary, and you will find elements of power and forms of influence by no means obsolete among ourselves. Let us bear in mind that it was then the spring-time of the Christian faith, when all the buds of the new life were bursting forth after the Pentecostal showers and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness to His place in the heavens. Do you wonder if the Holy Spirit signalised His new and abundant coming into human nature and life by empowering the first believers to achieve much that now lies beyond the limits of our activity? Do you wonder that He should work through the bodies as well as through the souls of believers upon others, in ways that are to us inaccessible. Our union of the healing art with the work of the missionary, our exercise of discipline within the church, and the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, are nineteenth-century developments of these first supernatural endowments of the Holy Spirit.

Still, many of you are feeling that in enumerating gifts distributed among workers, I have not alluded to some of the most precious. That is very probable, for there must ever be new developments and manifestations of gifts to meet the varying necessities of Christian service.

But you will ask in some surprise: Are there gifts in exercise to-day among workers, for which

Scripture furnishes no parallel? Are there powers and blessings enjoyed now, which lie outside the horizon of Revelation? That does not follow. For we have not yet ranged through all the wealth of light which the Bible throws upon gifts closely akin in their character to graces.

In the actions and lives of the men who made sacred history—in Bezaleel the artificer, as well as in Joseph the statesman—we have examples of unusual gifts bestowed upon persons selected for unusual service. But in this, as in other respects, our Saviour is the perfect illustration of the bounty of the Father. Jesus Christ is the highest revelation of gift as well as of grace. In Him we see a constellation of powers infinitely more spiritual and pure than any visible in the whole heavens of human thought. Yet how softly His gifts shine, neither dazzling by their excess of brightness, nor confusing by their manifold and radiant light. Much in that great heart of His is to our poor eyes a luminous haze of holy love; but the day will come when, with heightened vision, that too will resolve itself into clusters of gifts ineffable in beauty, and unique in magnitude.

It is now one of the world's axioms, that in Jesus all moral and spiritual perfections culminate. It will not therefore be unbecoming or irreverent if we also find in Him some of the choicest gifts

which God can distribute among Christian workers. The sympathy which opens up fountains of penitent tears, the burning love which wins and constrains the soul, the unwearying patience with the slow of heart to believe, untiring diligence in seeking the lost and ruined of the world, constant hopefulness in the face of sin and death and despair, unflinching courage before accumulating danger and physical disaster—all these are found in Jesus, and we do well to covet these transcendent qualities of the heart and life. But even gifts of the mind find their most exquisite expression in His deft dealing with individuals. How He seizes opportunities on the wing! How He strikes in at the right time and at the right place! With what delicate precision and matchless insight does He parry the attacks of the evil-minded, and leave stings of conviction behind to rankle in the hearts of the froward and insincere! No one has ever equalled Him in putting the truth aptly. None ever made the highest mysteries so plain to the simplest understanding. No finer fancy, no more ethereal imagination, no nimbler wit has ever made faith in God so beautiful and attractive to men.

The heroes of the faith after Pentecost were also enriched with every kind and degree of spiritual gift. Nothing seemed to be wanting

to 'clothe them with power. Boldness for the truth, hatred of sin and error, a spirit of never-ending praise and of persevering and prevailing prayer, immeasurable sociability in the Spirit, a love of the souls of men only less remarkable than their love of God, a willingness for sacrifice, a readiness to do little as well as great things for the Kingdom, an understanding of the times while preoccupied with eternity—these, and almost every conceivable endowment, are admirably exemplified in these elder brethren of the great brotherhood of Christian workers.

What an effusion of gift have we here within the area covered by sacred history! What a wealth of life and love does it betoken in the Giver! Well may we believe that there is no poverty in God! If there is straitness, it must be in us and not in Him. "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (James i. 5, 6, 7).

When we thus try to set forth the nature and number of the gifts distributed by God among those who work for Him, we cannot fail to be



struck with their variety. The variety of their distribution is that which has excited more discussion than any other characteristic. It has raised clouds of controversy, and provoked no end of bitter feeling. It is instinctively felt to be the ultimate and most enduring source of the inequalities of life, and has been resented accordingly. Men have asked: If God be just, why are His gifts to men so unequal? Why does He load some with His benefits, while others are bowed down beneath His burdens? To one He gives health and strength in rude abundance, to another the incubus of an incurable weakness. To one a plethora of wealth, to another a blighting poverty.

We cannot, of course, deal here with the painful and perplexing problems that have their origin in these inequalities of original endowment or position. That would take us too far afield. Nor can we wait to apportion the responsibility between God and men in the light of Science and Revelation.

After all allowance has been made for the influence of ancient or recent wrongs and misgovernment, the selfishness of the rich or the inertness of the poor, there remain differences which God has established between men by the inequality in His distribution of gifts to them.

Heaven forbid that we should say one word capable of being construed into a defence of unrighteous privilege! No authority on earth can ever protect it with Divine sanction; and so long as the Holy Spirit lives and works in the Christian Church and the hearts of men, our duty is to smite it down whenever and wherever we can. We are on the Lord's side, and we fight injustice not only when it has assumed the proportions of a social danger, or threatens destructive change—as Christian workers we are in arms against every condition of things that menaces the possibility of men living a Christian life in this world, without waiting for ideal adjustments in the next.

Nevertheless, here we confine ourselves to the question as it affects us and our work within the spiritual sphere. Have you never had your faith darkened or your energy depressed by the shadows of selfish discontent with your gifts or your position? You do not begrudge a fellow-worker his success or the qualities which bring it; but you pray, "Bless me, even me also, O my Father." You do not accuse the Almighty of partiality or favouritism; but you often wonder whether there really is a place for you among His workers. Your talent is so poor and paltry. "Is it not a little one?" you exclaim. "Can I do

anything with it?" "Is it worth while to continue trying?" If some such feelings ever visit your hearts, you must carry them to God in prayer, and He will give you relief. He will banish this disease of self-consciousness, and restore to you a healthy interest in the work of His Kingdom. You are not fit to be reasoned with until this has been done. No man would be so foolhardy as to offer to justify the ways of God to men, or expect you to take a reasonable view of your own case, while you are troubled with this evil spirit of peevishness.

After this healing process has been effected, your eyes will be couched, and your spiritual perspective corrected. You will feel that you are in God's sight an unlovely creature, and that a million of millions of such beings as yourself would indeed be a sad blot on creation. You will want every other person to be different from you. Of all the miseries that can befall you, the multiplication of yourself to infinity throughout the world will seem one of the most afflicting and deplorable. You will be cured for ever of the disease of self in this common form of it.

What a trite and threadbare thing existence would be if we were all slavish copies of one man in natural qualities and perfections! Myriads of Apollos would pall upon our taste without pros-

pect of change or variety in the type. Even a world full of Shakespeares or millionaires would fatigue us! How much more when the uniformity is proposed to be secured by levelling down to the dead mean of mediocrity! How fatal would that be to all that is best and brightest and most beautiful in life! Where would be the joy, the zest of living? We should pine for lack of poetry and romance, we should die from inanition.

More important still would be the disappearance of social bonds by the equalisation of men's gifts and condition. If all were made alike, how awkwardly should we fit into each other, and how impotent and ineffective would be the society which was thus constituted! Paul first taught us to speak of society as an organism. The lesson has been dinned into our ears by Herbert Spencer and Leslie Stephen in our own day. We are members one of another. Round about us is a Universe of connections and communications. We are none of us single, none of us independent. The life of any society is like the life of the human body—all have a part in it; all are united together, not mechanically or accidentally, but vitally and of necessity. From that bundle of wants, an inarticulate baby, up to the most self-sufficient man, each needs the society and help of his kind in innumerable ways. But if all were

equally endowed and exactly alike in all particulars, they would not be able to get it, and the world of men and women could not be held together for a day. It would be a mere aggregation of like units, without any uniting spirit. For, apart from the social instinct, what is it that binds men most effectually together? Is it not their mutual interdependence, the necessity under which we all lie of getting help. Is not society a polite excuse for such profitable and necessary interchanges? What you lack another has, and what you have another is without. Therefore you turn to one another for mutual assistance. Social unity thus arises out of individual diversity, and a spirit of oneness from variety and difference.

Social efficiency as well as social unity is the fruit of this variety of endowment. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" (1 Cor. xii. 17.) The working power of the body, its usefulness as the organ of the soul, depends upon the multiplicity and variety of its members. So it is with the body of Christ. Is it not a great weakness in the Christian Church when it looks for likeness *only*, among its members? Is there not, even among Christian workers, an undue tendency to expect uniformity of gift? Must we not guard ourselves against cherishing this unwarranted expectation? For if gifts be

the things wherein our main strength for service lies, the more varied they are, the better and fuller will be the service rendered. If gifts be the organs of the Holy Spirit's activities within the Church, the greatest variety in these will permit the utmost possible fulness of His manifestation. Why should we therefore dream of limiting the types of gift which God may use in His service? The word of wisdom may be excellent, and preaching the pre-eminent way of bringing men to Christ, but why exclude other gifts and methods of serving Him?

Should we not rather welcome the tendency to variation in gift as Science does, and look upon it as one of the heralds of progress and the parent of increasing perfection? At all events, our faith in the future of God's Kingdom should be confirmed rather than weakened by the multitudinous variety of gift which He is constantly distributing to the workers within His Church. We need never fear that the results can fall out with His final purpose, for gifts are only fruitful as used by Him; and we know that, however different in kind or degree, all genuine gifts for service emanate from "one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will" (1 Cor. xii. 11).

We have been speaking principally of variety



in the distribution of natural gifts, but the same holds true to a large extent of those which are spiritual. The exceptions arise from the entrance of a new factor as the cause of variety in this special order of gifts. No doubt sin causes many differences in men's condition and powers, but it affects most injuriously and universally their enjoyment and exercise of spiritual gifts. There it has a laming, paralysing, and perverting power which it cannot be said to have in other spheres. It interferes with receiving the Holy Spirit, or transmitting spiritual power to others. It hinders the increase of grace within our own souls. Gifts can neither be given nor multiplied where sin is more or less in full possession of the heart.

Even after the new heart has been received and we have been renewed in the spirit of our mind, there must be a special baptism of the Spirit for service. We must not only have the Spirit, we must be filled with the Spirit. But this filling cannot take place until there has been a previous emptying. After being cleansed from defilement of the flesh and of the heart, after purification from selfish motives in seeking the gifts, after absolute willingness to accept God Himself along with them, the spiritual gifts are sealed upon the heart by a faith strong but simple and sincere.

If you are not enjoying these blessings, you, as Christian workers, have reason to be discontented with yourselves, and out of humour with the environment in which you are living. If the Holy Spirit is not bestowing gifts upon you, the fault is in yourself. Therefore search your heart and life.

Emerson has said that the gate of gifts closes at birth. After a man emerges from his mother's womb, he can have no new endowments and no fresh increments of strength and wisdom, joy and grace within.

That is a deistic view, not at all Christian. We are none of us at creation cut off from God, and let loose into the world on our own account. After our moral life begins, there is a difference in the way in which gifts can be given us by God. They are then chiefly communicable through the mediation of our own endeavours. But at no time should we be without the concurrent activity of the Divine Spirit, and there is never a moment of faith when direct blessing cannot descend upon us, if we be faithful to what we have already received, and are using the means which God has appointed. He does not usually give unless we are using the means. He seeks our co-operation, not a bare and passive reception. He gives, but we must actively receive. He pours out His

Spirit upon us, and how important is it that our hearts should be in a fit condition for this cleansing, inspiring, and blissful experience !

If there is any more difficulty left in our minds with regard to the variety in God's distribution of His gifts, the last trace of it should be taken away when we come, in closing, to consider the purpose for which they are given, and the principle by which their value is attested.

They are "given to every man to profit withal"; that is, for the good of the Church first, and the world afterwards. This is the sole and supreme principle which regulates their distribution.

In common life, when we receive gifts from men, their chief value to us is as an expression of personal goodwill. With gifts from God it is somewhat different. They are given us, not for ourselves, but for others. Grace, not gifts, is the measure and expression of his love. The latter are rooted in His sovereign will and wisdom. The giving of them is a free act of God. If we go farther and seek a motive for the giving, it must be found in His love. If He blesses the few with high gifts, it is for the sake of the many.

This is very evident from Scripture, where gifts are regarded as trusts, not as possessions for personal use or ornament. The recipients are God's stewards, chosen not for any superiority

in them as men, but for their ability or fitness to administer the gifts for the good of others. Faithfulness, then, is what is required of them.

“What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Cor. iv. 7). This is God’s question to the stewards of His gifts. There is no ground for pride or self-inflation, there is every call to gratitude and humility. From the hearts of His stewards the prayer should be constantly ascending for wisdom to use aright what they have received from God.

If there is no room for vanity or pride, neither is there cause for self-depreciation or despondency. No man can have all gifts; none are without any. What you have, God has given. Faithfulness is all that is required of you. You may have few talents, and be only a humble worker, but you are not therefore useless. You might have had fewer. The man who stumbles might have been unable to walk. He who has not the gift of song might have been refused speech. Be thankful, be diligent, be faithful, and those who are less favoured will be as warmly welcomed by the Master as the most highly gifted of His servants.



IV

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PROGRAMME OF  
CHRISTIAN SERVICE





#### IV

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PROGRAMME OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Bring me my bow of burning gold !  
Bring me my arrows of desire !  
Bring me my spear, O clouds unfold !  
Bring me my chariot of fire !  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

IF you are now impressed with the conviction that your life ought to be a whole-hearted service of God and man for Christ's sake, much has been gained. If, in addition, you have learnt the lessons of last lecture, and are recognising God's distribution of gifts as an indirect co-operation with you in service, another step in advance has been taken. If, finally, you have come to regard your gifts as a trust committed to you by God, to be used for His glory and the good of men, then you will be ready to hold yourself and your gifts at the Divine disposal.

But you cannot stop here. You cannot rest content with passive discipleship. You must exchange it for active service. As a matter of fact, many of you have already done so. It is in the act of making this change that a programme of service may be found useful.

The new problems discussed in it are not wholly new. They spring in part out of the subjects which have gone before. We have spoken of gifts, we are now to treat more fully and definitely of the circumstances and the service for which the gifts are bestowed; for as the gifts differ, so likewise do the spheres for their exercise.

This variety gives rise to the first class of difficulties which a programme is designed to meet. Variety of field for all means inequality of opportunity for some. How are we to regard these inequalities? Are they ordained of God, or are they in any sense the outcome of chance and human caprice? Are they injurious or beneficent? Are the commonly accepted notions about them Christian? Do the distinctions made between them as higher and lower, or larger and smaller spheres of service necessarily coincide with the classification of them in the Divine mind? Can the inequalities due to sin be overcome by the grace of God, and be made to minister to the

higher good of men? These are questions upon which a programme may be expected to shed some light.

A second group of difficulties emerges in connection with alleged maladjustments of gift and opportunity. The world sometimes seems strangely out of joint—round men are fitted into square holes, and square men into round holes. The gaps between some men's gifts and their opportunities are so painful and distressing that we are tempted to ask whether there is after all a presiding Providence adjusting means to ends. Is the Church of Christ itself governed by a policy of drift, or subject to the sway of blind and lawless forces? Is there no power bringing good out of evil, and restoring the Divine order of human life which sin has marred?

The very idea of a programme supplies a much-needed corrective to the tone and temper in which these difficulties originate. For it is based upon the presupposition that God works always and everywhere according to a preconceived plan and purpose, and that there are no accidents and no unforeseen occurrences or events. Even the disorders and disabilities due to sin are seen to evoke higher forms of service.

As earnest Christian workers, probably neither the first nor the second of these difficulties ever

troubled you, and you are inclined to regard them as largely fictitious or unreal. You are concerned only with the embarrassments and hindrances which you meet with in actual life.

The third group of difficulties may be characterised as purely practical, since they offend against practical considerations and appeal to practical men. Were it not for these, the question might very well arise in the minds of some of you, whether there is any need for a programme at all. Were there no people in want of the help which it provides, were the multitudes engaged in Christian work to be trusted always to choose the best ways of doing it, then there might be no necessity for our presenting you with the Holy Spirit's programme of Christian service.

Upon one point there will be room for great diversity of opinion. We do not profess to be able to settle whether Christian workers do or do not lack practical guidance. Of this each must judge for himself or herself; we can only speak for ourselves and those who happen to agree with us. We have ever to remember that it is not merely the question of fitting each worker into his proper place, but the larger one of getting the best and most efficient service from all available workers, and preventing many of the miseries, disappointments, and losses attendant upon mis-

directed zeal. If we are to judge by many signs and symptoms, the bulk of wrong-headed, useless, or wasteful activity is by no means inconsiderable. From personal experience and observation, we think there is undoubtedly need for guidance both as to the objects and the methods of Christian service. We may bless God that now, as ever, the way of the good life is so plain, that a "wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." Nevertheless, the follies of the wise, and the blunders of the good make us pray for some remedy.

During the last half-century there has been an enormous increase in the number and variety of religious and philanthropic activities. Our generation has witnessed more (outwardly) good works than any which has gone before it. A thousand opportunities of usefulness once undiscovered or neglected are now seized by willing workers. Every day seems to add to the number of volunteers for fields of service new and old. Any project which ingenuity can devise, Christian love will execute. Every professed remedy for spiritual and social evils can be sure of a hearing on its merits, and if it commends itself only to a few, it will be put to the test of practice.

This is a comparatively new condition of things, and it has given rise to a new class of dangers in Christian service. Where this is not



so, it has gravely accentuated the dangers already in existence. Against both of these, the young and inexperienced worker must be warned.

The promoters of the most contradictory enterprises do not hesitate to claim the common name of Christian for their schemes. We do not say that their proposals are either intrinsically bad, or intentionally dishonest. Yet many of them contain elements that are out of harmony with the distinctive principles of the Christianity of Christ. Therefore we are in want of some clear and unmistakable criterion of what is Christian in service. Again, though we would not always measure the value of Christian efforts by their visible results, yet we do wish that these were more frequently borne in mind. We cannot for a moment shut our eyes to the fact that there are vital differences discoverable in this direction. Sometimes the results are solid and good, at other times unsubstantial and delusive, in yet other cases they are conspicuous by their absence. Whenever you are in grave doubt as to the final issue of some new enterprise, and cannot readily reach certainty, it is reasonable to show a provisional preference for the ways of serving God and men, which are Scriptural in principle and have stood the test of time, proving fruitful in the experience of many generations.

If the Holy Spirit's programme helps to deliver workers from delusion and disappointment, will it not be a signal blessing to the Church and society at large? Is it not a pity that any of you should waste time and strength upon modern lines of effort foredoomed to failure? Is it not sad when precious spiritual energies are lost, faith weakened, and hope blighted, by following futile forms of service? If a programme prevents any of this holy fire of saving love from being deadened and dissipated, it will not be useless to the Christian worker.

But you may still say, as a practical objection, that even if a programme is desirable and useful, you do not see that it is attainable. We grant that it is not easy just to lay our hands upon it. It is not drawn up in so many conspicuous words of Scripture. We nowhere come upon a formal statement of the objects of Christian effort and the order in which they should be taken up. The Bible is the literature of the Holy Spirit, and it has other and higher work to do for us than the provision of ready-made programmes. It is also contrary to the genius, and alien to the method of Jesus to fling out manifestoes for the use of His followers in each succeeding generation. Shall we have recourse to the history and principles of Christian ethics, or to the so-called

science of Christian sociology? We can receive help from all of these auxiliary studies, but we cannot devolve upon any one of them the responsibility for our programme. The Holy Spirit's exhibition of human needs and the Divine provision for them in Christ is the all-sufficient source of the first principles of Christian practice. But when we come to interpret these needs and apply these provisions to the times we live in, consciously or unconsciously, we use our own judgment as that has been purified and rectified by the Holy Spirit and Christian experience. If the resultant programme has for you the authority of revelation it will be well ; but if not, it may still be useful in directing and systematising your efforts.

We saw, in the first lecture, whom we are to serve ; now, we naturally ask how, and where, and with what purpose. In other words, we want to arrive at the Holy Spirit's general programme for members of Christ's Kingdom, and with it what is characteristically Christian in service, with a view to making that enter into, and govern all our activities.

For a programme to fulfil this function, it must embody the great ends of Christian service, striking the keynote of all fruitful spiritual activity for the glory of God and the good of man, and mapping out the different fields in which it is to be realised.

Whatever else is wanting, these things at least must be found in any programme of Christian service worthy of the name.

The Holy Spirit's programme is a very simple thing. It is not ambitious. It merely seeks to provide an outline of the various branches of Christian service in the order of their importance for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. It must have a reference to two great spheres—that of worship and work—the two highest and best things in life.

Of worship we have seen to whom it should be offered, and we have now to say how. In answer to the first, we say that it should be offered to God alone. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (St. Matthew, iv. 10), said Christ at an important crisis in His life. The worship of the Virgin or of angels is not Christian, though in our time and country a determined effort is being made to revive it under specious distinctions in the meaning of the word worship.

We say no more as to whom we are to worship, but proceed to consider how our worship should be offered. Three things should be sought in it. We should strive to make it worthy of God, fruitful for ourselves, and blessed to others.

(a) It should be worthy of God—that is,

spiritual. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit" (St. John iv. 24). Whilst we pray, or praise, or preach, or give alms, or communicate with God through the sacramental bread and wine, we must seek, above all things, to have our mind and heart moving in the native element of God—in the atmosphere of the Spirit. For this reason, all semi-pagan rites like the Mass, or the use of altar-lights and incense, etc., are out of place in Christian worship. They rest upon a non-spiritual idea of God, and are therefore unworthy of Him. Yet in our day, in professedly Protestant churches, some contend that the species of ritual which is identified with these is alone entitled to be called Christian. Absurdity can no further go. How our reforming forefathers would denounce this mixture of superstition and materialism as derogatory to the character of the Divine Being!

As we have said, what we should aim at is communion with God in all the parts of Christian worship—a communion which brings into exercise healthily and harmoniously the higher powers of our nature. This result can only be reached when the worshipper consciously recognises the spiritual personality of God as answering in some mysterious way to his own in and through every act of worship.

(b) Our worship should also be fruitful of good to ourselves as well as honouring to God. It should be "in truth." Where have we the truth—in the sense of the true life for us—if not in Jesus Christ? If, then, we wish to have our hearts cleansed and our wills renewed in worship, it must be by making every approach to God in accordance with the mind of Christ. Thus may we hope, sooner or later, to have the same mind in us. By such a scheme of worship, too, we enable the truth, as it is in Jesus, to make a saving or sanctifying impression upon the soul of every sincere worshipper. Then it cannot fail to be fruitful.

(c) Lastly, our acts of worship should be such as are not only fruitful for ourselves but blessed to others. They must be in love—not only love to God, but to man. This is the most characteristic element distinguishing Christian from other types of worship. Whatever we wish in it for ourselves, we must be prepared to extend to others. Their good must be as much a matter of concern with us as our own. The sins and wants of our fellow men should be a burden upon our hearts which we leave with God on each occasion of worship. When such love inspires and animates ritual it will effectually prevent it from degenerating into a routine of dead habits and dying observances.



But worship, after all, is only the one-half of Christian service ; the other half is work—work with God among men. What form should it take, and what makes it distinctively Christian ? The answer to this must be found in its essential nature as co-operation with God through the Holy Spirit for the highest good of man. There are two questions which we must ask if we are to work with God the Holy Spirit in Christian service—first, What is He doing ? and then, How far can we share in His activities ?

Is He creating—bringing new things into being ? If so, we can only to a very limited extent co-operate with Him in this. We can neither create nor destroy in the Divine manner but we can make or mar what He has created. All the arts and handicrafts of men are, in a sense, co-operation with God the Father. When we cut the woods and plough the fields, or mine the earth and fathom the ocean, we may be carrying to completion the Divine purpose in creating them. When we improve the flowers or tame the wild beasts, or are engaged in the manufacture of utilities for bodily needs, we may be working with God, and entering into partnership with Him in His high designs for the good of man. It is something to have learned that even in these things we may be workers with Him. The

heathen, when most cultivated and civilised, have difficulty in apprehending this elementary truth of the Christian religion. We ourselves have scarcely yet realised that in ministering to the bodily or mental needs of our fellow-men we are serving God. Most certainly, if we do these things for Christ's sake, and for the ends of His Kingdom, we co-operate with God the Holy Spirit and enrol ourselves in the ranks of Christian workers. He who during so many years of His earthly life followed the humble occupation of a carpenter cannot think meanly of the similar activities of the great mass of men, when they are carried on in His Spirit.

Providence is another work in which God the Father is constantly engaged. Can we co-operate more fully with Him in this? Holy, wise, tender, and powerful, He preserves all the creatures He has made, provides for their ever-recurring wants, controls the indulgence of their desires, and governs all their actions. This is a great work—higher, in some of its aspects, than creation. How far can we share in it?

We have undoubtedly been entrusted with a certain measure of independence which empowers us to exercise a helpful oversight and preserving care in regard to our fellow-men. This power is strictly delegated, and the area within which it

acts is a narrow one; but it is unquestionably real as far as it goes. It is, however, as instruments in the Divine hand, and servants of the Divine will, that we can be said to exercise these high functions. Nevertheless, in them we help or hinder the realisation among men of the Divine purpose. The statesman, the employer and organiser of labour, the mother of children, the merchant, the philanthropist, and the physician are Christian workers if their service is rendered in the spirit of the Master.

But Creation and Providence do not exhaust the Divine activities. God the Son and Holy Spirit is ever active also in the work of Redemption. God not only creates and provides for man, He seeks also to redeem him from the bondage of his fallen nature, and clothe him with the freedom and power and glory of the in-breathed Spirit.

In this work God the Holy Spirit is pleased to associate us with Himself more than in any other, and we are gathered together that we may discuss how far, and in what ways, we may best serve Him in it. No doubt there are many departments of Divine redemptive activity in which God works largely alone. He first devised the idea and design of redeeming man; it was the fruit or outcome of His fatherly love in Christ.

In this He did not consult with us. Neither did He seek our conscious co-operation in carrying out that work of reconciliation through Christ which makes redemption possible. The change of heart and character, and the transformation of our life, is, in the last resort, not our work, but the Holy Spirit's. It is carried out through His action in us. Still, in redemption, far more than in creation and providence, God is pleased to seek our aid and use our instrumentality.

From the beginning He has employed prophets and holy men in preparing the way for the reception of Jesus; and when the Redeemer came in the fulness of time, He was born of a woman, and was trained among men, and afterwards associated some of them with Himself in His three years' public ministry. Before His ascension, He gave to faithful disciples the great commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (St. Mark xvi. 15). The descent of the Holy Spirit into human nature, and the founding of the Christian Church, as well as many other manifestations and arrangements, were designed to inaugurate and establish the religion of redemption in the world, so that in this work God unites men with Himself more closely, fully, and freely than in any other. In first providing the Scriptures of the

Old and New Testaments to be the written record of redemption for all time, God co-operated with men through the Holy Spirit, and He continues to avail Himself of human help in bringing the Gospel of Redemption to the knowledge of all peoples by means of translation into the tongues of the various tribes and nations.

The work of the earliest apostles was in many ways peculiarly dependent upon the Spirit's fullness and power, but all who follow in their faith are called to service differing little in kind and less in degree from theirs. We have to preach, and pray, and praise, and baptize, and administer the Communion of Christ's body and blood. We have also to circulate the Scriptures in the languages of men, and make disciples everywhere.

Therefore, in carrying out the purpose of God in redemption your work must chiefly lie. The other callings of men are Christian, when pursued for Christ's sake and in His spirit; but the work of co-operating directly with God in redeeming is the highest to which any human being can aspire, and it contributes most to the coming of Christ's Kingdom. It is Christian service, and it is yours as Christian workers. Moreover, it is well that the Christian Church should recognise more and more distinctly your existence and activity within it. If you had not been allowed

to co-operate with God through the Spirit in the work of man's redemption, you would feel as if you had been left out altogether. Co-operation with Him in other fields carries less momentous issues. They are largely for time; this is for eternity. They meet material, this spiritual needs. They are of and for the body; this is of and for the soul. You must feel that you are called to a high and blessed work when you are commissioned, like the Saviour, "to preach good tidings unto the meek; . . . to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness . . ." (Isaiah lxi. 1-3).

Moreover, in the light of this truth, we can now make the definition of Christian service more explicit and historically intelligible by substituting for the phrase "the highest good of man,"—"the redemption of man." We do not thereby deny that the good of the whole man is aimed at in Christian service. It includes the body; for if we promote the health of the body, we are acting in harmony with part of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



No doubt God intended that disease should be eliminated from human life in the process of the ages. We should go down into the silent and lonely grave as we go to our rest at night after the fatiguing labours of the day. They who minister to those ends are, in a subordinate sense, also servants of Jesus Christ. Every pure-minded writer who enlightens and educates the mind is one of God's workmen. And yet we have to remember, as we have seen, that these activities are preliminary. They exist for the sake of a greater thing than themselves—the deliverance of the precious spiritual nature from the thrall of sin, and the enfranchisement of the whole man by the power of God in Christ. Here man finds his highest good, and God works through every other good towards this—crowning His activities by sending His Son for man's redemption.

Here is the keynote of Divine, as opposed to human philanthropy. In our work for the good of men, we are apt to ignore the highest for the sake of the lowest, or at best to use it as a means to an end lower than itself. We often forget Christ's characteristic method in relieving the necessities of men. He sympathised acutely with their bodily wants. Their temporal miseries lay very near to His heart throughout life. He constantly felt the terrible burden of the world's distress.

These things are evident from His deeds of healing, and His ceaseless labours of love. But did He content Himself with working to banish the natural causes of these evils from human life? Do we ever find Him representing bodily happiness and comfort as the supremely desirable condition for each or for all? Does He not lay the stress on higher things, which are more remote from men's immediate needs and wishes? Was He not anxious to purge the heart from sin, rather than the lot from hardship? We, in our charities, often enervate the moral nature of those we seek to relieve. Christ never forgot the higher in caring for the lower wants of men. He habitually couples the forgiveness of sin with acts of healing, as if expressly to remind the healed person that there were ills of the soul to be cured as well as ills of the body. Do not fail, my friends, to seek the social elevation and temporal prosperity of those among whom you work, but do not rest satisfied with that. If your work is to deserve the name of Christian, and to contribute to the redemption of men, you cannot afford to forget for a moment the method of the Master. Parents ruin their children often in the name of love. They cater to the most vulgar and ignoble passions within them, and imagine that they are doing them a kindness. The Father in heaven

will never make the same mistake with us. He will never sacrifice a higher for a lower good in training us for the service of His Kingdom.

What is the explanation of this method of the Master? In His view, sin in one form or another was at the bottom of earth's miseries. He saw clearly that in many instances it could not be the sin of the immediate sufferer, but that of some ancestor or other person with whom he has relations. The important thing to do was to abolish the sin, and the suffering that follows in its wake would then be cut off at its fountain-head. Supposing He had adopted the reverse method and confined Himself to curing the evil only when and where it appeared, His work would have been much less thorough and enduring. The process of stopping the running sores of society would be little more than binding up certain wounds while sin opened others; it would be cleansing the stream at its mouth, while the source remained tainted and impure; it would be removing the effect without destroying the cause. The battle against evil would then be endless and hopeless; it would be incessant fighting, with no assurance of final victory. The old disease would break out in new places; the passion that was stamped out in one direction would reappear in another, and we should get no nearer the goal. Christ's method

goes deeper. He cleanses the springs within by redeeming the whole nature, inward as well as outward, from the power and guilt of sin.

It is in this spirit that we interpret the social mission of the Christian Church in our own day. While the really helpless members of the community cannot have too much done for them, we must beware of weakening the self-reliance and self-respect of those able to help themselves. We may minister to others in mistaken ways, by doing for them what they would be the better of doing for themselves. The necessitous sick should have hospitals built for them and gratuitous nursing—such work is unmistakably Christian. Children who are waifs and strays, or orphan and neglected, Christ would have gathered into homes, and placed under the care of loving-hearted Christian people. The mentally weak, and all other incapable children of humanity, Christ would have treated with a like kindness and consideration, and we should honour with grateful hearts those who are engaged in such blessed work in our midst. We cannot have too much of this good work done in this good way. We are not pauperising men, and yet we are enriching humanity. We are mitigating the world's woes, mastering its ancient evils, providing opportunities of well-being and careers of usefulness where these are lacking, and remedying many

of the common ills that "flesh is heir to," and we are doing these things on a scale more commensurate with the needs and the knowledge of our generation. But in all our modern Christian service let us never forsake the method of the Master, and then we shall not be without the highest and most enduring results. Preach the Gospel of Redemption along with all your other good works. Thus you will better the social condition of the lapsed masses, and you will at the same time heal in them the diseases of soul and conscience, and build them up in the righteousness that is through faith.

In the light of the Holy Spirit, and with the help of a Christian writer, we can now map out for you the different fields in which Christian service may be rendered. It is a mere skeleton that we present, and we would have you to regard it as such. Christian service really includes all that makes human life worth living, and it is not to be expected that the faintest outline of such a vast and perennial scheme of beneficence can be given in one or two pages of a book. It would take the whole panorama of activity in earth and heaven to illustrate it adequately.

## CHRISTIAN SERVICE

### CAN BE EXERCISED IN MINISTERING

#### A. To all varieties of needs :—

1. Of the body . . . Hospital, sanitary, etc.
2. Of the mind . . . Educational and remedial, literary, scientific, etc.
3. Of the moral nature . Temperance, chastity, etc.
4. Of the spiritual life . The gospel of the Kingdom of God, as converting, sanctifying, comforting, edifying, correcting, and developing men.
5. Of the social nature . Civil and political activity, industrial, etc.

#### B. To needs of people of all ages :—

1. Of the child . . . Sunday school, orphanage, etc.
2. Of the youth . . . Classes (Scripture, etc.), clubs, guilds, societies, etc.
3. Of the adult . . . Labour bureau, prison gate, agricultural settlements, assisted emigration, etc.
4. Of the aged . . . Poor relief, almshouses and homes, efforts to brighten the life within existing institutions, etc.

#### C. To needs of people of all places :—

1. Of the home-lands . Missions, etc., to the lapsed masses.
2. Of the Continent of Europe . Evangelisation of the unreformed church populations, and application of Christian ideas to international relations, etc.
3. Of the Colonies . Planting churches and schools, etc., among emigrants.
4. Of heathen countries . Foreign Missions of all kinds, etc.





V

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PREPARATION  
FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE



## V

### THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

I'll range the plenteous intellectual field,  
And gather every thought of sovereign power  
To chase the moral maladies of man :  
Thoughts which may bear transplanting to the skies,  
Nor wholly wither there where seraphs sing  
Refined ! exalted—not annulled in heaven.

EDWARD YOUNG.

THERE are certain earnest, religious people who do not see the need of preparation for Christian service. They speak as if regeneration were all that is necessary by way of fitting them to work with God among men. The blessing which they have received themselves, they begin immediately to communicate to others. They say : "We believe, and therefore seek that others may be led to do as we have done. The personal experience we have passed through in conversion is in itself so great as to suffice for Christian service. Example is more potent than precept in bringing others to conviction, and the very newness of the

change makes it tell with those who are witnesses of its effect upon the life. Facts are always more impressive for purposes of persuasion than any theory of them, however good or accurate." It is only theoretical knowledge, they think, of Divine things that can be given in formal efforts at preparation. The regenerating work of the Spirit of God upon the heart is the only training they need. When they have been the subjects of His saving operations, they are fully prepared to make known to others the blessedness they have experienced themselves.

This conviction, often tenaciously held, has much in it that is true and commendable. It cannot be said to be connected with any particular article of faith, or to be peculiar to one church; for persons who hold it are to be found in all churches. Nevertheless, in modern times, the Salvation Army is well known to make this a cardinal principle in its work—that the convert is immediately installed as a worker for the conversion of others. The advantages which attend this system of organisation are undoubted. They are palpably present to the eye of every one who cares to see them. The freshness of feeling, the heartiness of motive, and the disposition to aim directly at the mark are evident and unmistakable. These converts know what they would

be at, and they make everything give way to the attainment of that. The matter-of-fact manner in which they were accustomed to do their work in the world, they now introduce into their religious activities. Everything seems to go down before an undivided will and a wholly consecrated heart. These they have, and they are the secrets of their success.

There are, however, many things to be said on the other side. Experience teaches, for example, that such workers are peculiarly apt to say and do things which injure the cause they seek to help. A new heart does not imply that the possessor of it has necessarily become wise in winning souls. The old Scotswoman's rebuke to a weak brother's ill-directed zeal is still *apropos*: "God has given you a new heart, my young man, but it is very evident that he has not given you a new head." The new mind and heavenly motives do not bring improved faculties, or greater practical wisdom in the use of them. If the memory or the judgment be at fault, if the knowledge be miserably inadequate, no inward renewal of the heart can altogether remedy these defects. There must therefore be a work to do in us before God can get the best work out of us. This is not less true in religious service than it is in everyday life. The fact that God's Spirit has



been given to us is a call to do more than we otherwise could have done for ourselves. For in order to be His obedient instruments and effective agents, we require a kind and degree of preparation proportional to the elevation and difficulty of the work He gives us to do.

But here we may be reminded that in Scripture it is said : " God chose the foolish things of the world, that He might put to shame them that are wise ; and God chose the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong ; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are " (1 Cor. i. 27, 28). This is the statement of a glorious truth which contains a principle lying very near the heart of the gospel. Those whom God uses must have no feeling of self-sufficiency. They must always be such as have more conscious need of Him than He has of them. At the bottom of their hearts they cherish the conviction that in serving Him they have more to get than to give. Otherwise, the Holy Spirit could not co-operate with them in the common service of God and man. So we see that it is a principle pregnant with the mind of God in our redemption. It humbles the proud, lifts up the lowly, and honours the work

of the Holy Spirit. It withers up and destroys every bud of self-conceit in the worker, and testifies to the essential dignity of the weakest man simply as a man. In making the condition of acceptance for service thus dependent upon sovereign grace, and not upon personal merit, God is acting in ways that are worthy alike of His supreme wisdom and infinite love.

Nevertheless we have to remember that the Apostle's statement was in the first instance historical rather than doctrinal. It was true of the circumstances and the methods of Divine procedure up till that time. Even then it was only in the erring judgment of the world that His servants were contemptible and weak. They are so described because they did not conform to the world's standards of greatness or power. The judgment of God in these matters is widely different from ours. He looks upon workers through no film of convention, no mist of passion or prejudice.

The writer of this passage was himself the most cultivated and learned and able of the apostles. It is not at all likely, therefore, that he would be the enemy of culture or learning or ability, when these are kept in their proper place, and in subordination to higher and more spiritual acquirements. It was philosophy or science, falsely so called, against which he inveighed. It

would be absurd and contrary to all teaching of history to believe that science or enlightenment can be hostile to the claims of Christ. The very reverse is the truth. True religion and true knowledge are mutually helpful, and both are necessary fully to equip the worker in our day for many of the fields of Christian service.

We must return to our conviction then, that in this, as in every other department of God's Kingdom, fitness is the condition of use. It is true that what we deem fit, God may think foolish, and what is fitness with Him may be foolishness to us. Yet this does not alter the fact that in so far as man's work is used, it is used according to its fitness for God's purposes. Let us never dream that He will employ ignorant men to teach wisdom, or worldly men to produce spiritual results, or lovers of ease to conduct arduous enterprises, or selfish men to generate the enthusiasm of love. Fitness of the right kind must belong to the instruments—however apparently weak, or slender, or foolish—by which the Holy Spirit works His will in the world around us.

If fitness be the law of service in the Kingdom, how is it to be produced? We cannot speak of preparation for the many special fields enumerated at the end of the previous lecture. That would require not one course of lectures, but a

whole series of courses. Whatever is peculiar to preparation for any one particular sphere must be omitted, and only those things that are essential to all workers can be mentioned.

First of all, we have to ask, What does preparation include? It implies, no doubt, the acquisition of knowledge and ideas, but more is certainly necessary. There must be the training and development, the cultivation and exercise of our powers. But even that is not enough for service that is to be distinctively Christian. There is something which the Holy Spirit must do for us, that is different from, and infinitely greater than, what we do for ourselves. The heart is the centre of the active life, and character the crown and goal; but the first spiritual preparation of both comes from our personal relation to God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The conscience must be cleansed, sin forgiven, the soul unconditionally surrendered, and the nature renewed, before we are called to enter into any high service. We must therefore mention, along with the other two elements and factors in preparation, a third, viz. regeneration, together with the spiritual discipline and development of character. The whole man must be sanctified by the Holy Spirit—our knowledge, our faculties, and our moral force—before we are fit to be unreservedly used in His work.

All our active life begins with ideas, and the practical reason is the part of our nature through which they come to us for service. Adequate ideas of God, His will for us, and our knowledge of an after life are received from the Bible ; therefore study of the Bible is one of the best means of preparing for Christian work. But the Bible can be better studied and known in proportion as we make ourselves familiar with the books of nature and history and life. These enable us to understand the literature of the Holy Spirit on its human side, and especially to interpret its application to ourselves and our circumstances.

All knowledge is good, but there are some kinds which are more essential to the Christian worker than others. Even his acquaintance with the Bible should be so ordered that he may extract from it a number of doctrinal beliefs as a basis from which to work. This should be organised in the mind into a system of practical divinity, including all the vital and commonly accepted articles of the Christian creed. We need hardly mention these : but the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the universal need of salvation, and the universal provision for it in the Saviour, together with clear views upon the new birth, the work of the Spirit, the efficacy of prayer, and the reality of coming judgment, are

indispensable parts of the equipment necessary for Christian work. You may and should believe much more, but you cannot afford to believe less.

Perhaps it might be well to classify the contents of Scripture with reference to these great doctrines; also the biographies which embody spiritual truths as they work out in character and destiny. An intimate knowledge should also be acquired of all those classical passages which have a direct bearing upon the condition of men before God.

If you have this biblical knowledge in an available form, so that you can readily use it when wanted, you are on the threshold of that preparation which is needed for the work of a home missionary or evangelist, Scripture-reader or sick-visitor, Sunday-school teacher or tract-distributor, missionary collector or Christian philanthropist.

But besides the acquisition of knowledge, you must deliberately endeavour to train and develop your faculties, and cultivate your gifts. There are the various powers of mind which we may speak of as memory, imagination, and judgment. Though these are constitutional, being the properties of our common nature as human, yet they are each of them susceptible of great differences through cultivation.



Memory is the basis of mental power, and though it varies greatly in different people, it admits of incalculable improvement in all. If it is to grow in accuracy and fulness, it can only be through patient and persistent exercise. When developed, it may be very helpful in Christian service. Through it, what was greatest and best in the past history of the world becomes a fountain of fresh power and inspiration for us in the present. When we can recall with vividness and warmth the lessons of the life, death, and resurrection of our Saviour, we have springs of heavenly blessing opened in our earthly life. Strengthen therefore your memory, and store it with those truths of which the Holy Spirit can make use. Be careful to exercise it upon the things which are wholesome and helpful, in opposition to those which weaken the fibre, and deteriorate the strain of your spiritual life.

Perhaps the imagination should be nursed more than the memory in religious training. It gives a fascinating ideality, completeness, and power to our visions of the past, the present, and the future. All the best things are invisible to the senses. They must be flashed upon the inner eye through this wonderful power. Hence it may be eminently useful in furthering the spiritual life. By it we realise the presence of God in hours of

sore temptation, and through it we enjoy the daily fellowship of the risen and glorified Christ. But alas! here, if anywhere, we require the healthful influences of the Holy Spirit to act continually upon us. Nothing so soon defiles the character as an unholy but ever active imagination. Nothing can more easily sully the whiteness of the cleansed soul. Its pictures recur again and again like visits of the devil. When sinful desire seems dead it is wakened into new life by the baneful activities of this evil magician within us. The heart cannot be wholly sanctified for service as long as any part of the imagination is left unredeemed by the Spirit of God.

But of all the powers of mind which minister to efficiency in service, judgment is that which is most necessary. It puts us into communication with our fellow-men and the world around us. It is the only way by which we can be related aright either to the one or the other. It is the same with Revelation. Our interpretation of its meaning, and application of its teaching to ourselves and others, is largely the work of a trained and sound judgment.

It is a faculty of the worker, which he needs to keep always in action. This is not so easy, for wakefulness of vision, detachedness of heart, discernment of the relation between cause and effect,

appreciation of shades of difference, intense and concentrated application to what is immediately before you, enter into a right exercise of judgment. In the commoner and narrower spheres of action, it is designated tact, and the world will bear us out in saying that few of the minor qualifications are more necessary to success than this. If you have any peculiar skill in detecting the fitness of things, and a happy way of doing what is required of you, you are said to possess tact. In how many ways is this much-prized and highly-lauded gift an indispensable auxiliary to work for God among men! How soon is the want of it perceived in others, if not in yourselves! How keenly is it felt, how frequently is it deplored! In securing the attention of an audience, in leading a meeting, or in issuing invitations to a service, in dealing with inquirers, in district visitation, and in winning your own relatives and friends to Christ, how often does fineness of tact stand you in good stead! Without it the most up-to-date methods, the most carefully conceived measures, and the most meritorious men may disappoint expectations.

What is correctly termed common sense—another form of judgment—is really earthly sanity of mind, clear vision of facts as they are, and perception of the actual relations that exist between

things. When this is applied to our work and its conditions, we have one of the best worldly guarantees that we are building on stable foundations.

Another form of judgment, so important that it deserves to be treated by itself, is the adaptation of means to ends. It has application in higher spheres of activity than tact and common sense. Memory may supply you with the material for eloquent pleading on behalf of Christ, imagination may brighten and beautify the language in which your pleading is conveyed, but without a just arrangement of your thoughts, and a due adaptation of them to those whom you wish to convince, you must fail in your main purpose. This is true with reference to other forms of influence than those working through speech. As recognised in the previous lecture, we have had a greatly increased activity in Christian service during the last generation; but thoughtful observers of the religious world cannot help asking again and again why, while so much is doing, so little is done. Part of the explanation is to be found in the lack of adaptation. Our methods are not suitable, or there is something wrong in the application of them to existing needs and conditions. We must be more business-like in our Christian work. If it is your experience that the

results are not forthcoming which you have a right to expect, you should be suspicious of the adaptability of the means used to obtain them, and revise them accordingly. Often the secret of failure will be found in the want of adaptation.

Experience is your great teacher in training and developing the judgment. There is, in fact, no other way of directly modifying and improving this power, if it is originally defective. No doubt, the effects of cultivating the other faculties of mind show themselves also in a better judgment with regard to action. If your judgment is to be Christian, the experience which develops it must be Christian. Hence the need for the third element in preparation—the regeneration and spiritual discipline of the heart and the development of character.

Spiritual discipline comes to us through the Holy Spirit enabling us to profit by the experiences of life—gained in temptation, in suffering, and in unselfish work for the good of others. The first kind of experience gives us insight and strength, the second sympathy, and the third practical habits of the right kind for service. Without temptation you could not have the key to the world's wants; without experience of suffering you would never get near enough to meet them; but without unselfish work you never

find out your own weaknesses, and the best ways of remedying them.

This essential preparation of the heart, Christian workers cannot, of course, get in classes such as these. They need not look to lecturers for it. Each must get it for himself and herself in personal religion. All other help is secondary by comparison. This is the Holy Spirit's part in the process of preparation for Christian service, but it is inseparably interwoven with ours. In thinking of all the things which have to be done, we must never forget those which the Holy Spirit does for us. For that is more important than the training we (in a measure) conduct for ourselves. We must unceasingly recognise the presence, and pray for the power of the Holy Spirit. We must seek to have His fire burning within us, that it may more and more consume all the petty and mean motives that mingle with service, and supply that heat and energy of mind, and warmth of heart, without which there can be no real efficiency.

With the help of the same Spirit we must also examine our service in the light of Christ's, that we may discover its failures, imperfections, and impurities. For Jesus is not only the person through whom redemption has come; He is also our perfect example of how it is wrought into human character. Therefore you must measure yourselves



by His standard if you are to get a deeper comprehension of men's needs and their claims upon you. It is when you think of your want of likeness to Christ, and your lack of His love for men, that you feel humbled. It is then that you appreciate the value of His blood in your efforts to draw near to His heart of love and His hand of power. It is then that the pride of life is mortified, and the lust of the flesh changed into the longing for the Spirit. There comes a strength into your hearts, and a sanctity into your character, which enables you, in passing through temptation, suffering, and unselfish work, to gain power with God and man, for the service of both.

We have also to remember that none of us are purely spiritual. You have bodies which your souls animate and inhabit. Through this part of your nature you must do much of your work. It is a vital part of yourselves, and it cannot be left outside the kingdom, if you enter it. When it is redeemed, it becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit, and chargeable with something of His peculiar power. Even the body, therefore, requires to be prepared for Christian service. No wise Christian despises it, or treats it as his enemy. It is one of God's good gifts to you, and you receive it in fee simple from those who went before you. It is an estate which you hold on entail for those

who come after you, and you must give it all the attention which a conscientious servant gives to the property of his master.

But the body is a servant, not a master. It must be kept in subjection. The physical is secondary to the spiritual, for the sake of which it was originally created. Nothing in God's world reaches its true use, until it is given up to the service of that which is above it. It is so with the body. It should be kept up by obedience to the laws of health, strengthened and developed by exercise. But we must not allow it to come in the way of the soul through that full-fed sensualism which is one of the curses of our generation. Whenever it is a dead weight, it interferes with the efficiency of service. You must not, on the other hand, go to an opposite extreme from an excess of spirituality, for which there is no warrant in Scripture. No doubt much good may be done in a weakened body, and in imperfect health, especially if it is not your fault that you groan in a weak body, being burdened. But all the more you should refrain from needless exposure to injury, and observe the great laws as to food, air, exercise, and rest. Seek also by spiritual life to cleanse the springs of inheritance for those who come after you. Only by making the most of your physique will you be able to work out

your Maker's plans for you, remembering that the body in some degree shares in the ruin which sin brings upon your finer powers. We can surely recognise the grandeur and comprehensiveness of the Apostle's prayer: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, body, soul, and spirit." No angel of intercession could ask more for you, and yet no truly Christian heart dare ask less.

Even if the body as well as the soul be thus passed through a course of spiritual discipline, the results are likely to be sadly disappointing in your Christian service. Christ as a worker is so infinitely above your best efforts to follow in His footsteps, that you are apt to be thrown into despair. So you should be, were imitation of Him your only resource in preparing for service. You have also to appropriate Him by Faith. Christ "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). You have to make His wisdom your own, His patience, His strength, and all the other qualities in Him that you need for your work. What is the means by which this appropriation goes on? It is a constant and living faith, which assimilates His grace as the body its food, or the flower the air and sunshine. All fulness dwells in Him, and it is through this appropriation of Him, as we read, that God expects the foolish,

and the weak, and the base, and the despised, and the nonentities, to conquer in the struggle with the wisdom and the might of the world. Imitation of Christ is cold and feeble in preparing you to work for Him. Appropriation, on the other hand, is inspiring, sustaining, and as life from the dead, if you have found the other fail you.

But before we can thus appropriate Christ, and make His qualities our own, we must be wholly His. We must have made a conscious and deliberate surrender of ourselves to Him, dedicating our powers to His service. We must feel that He is our Owner and Master, as well as our Saviour and Deliverer. The servant of Jesus needs not only to know and confess his shortcoming and sins and seek cleansing from them; he must habitually recognise that he and all that he has are the absolute property of God, to be used by Him as He will. It is the recognition of this proprietorship which is the essence of consecration, and perhaps the most indispensable spiritual element in preparation for service. No doubt all, in a general way, recognise the Divine ownership. They say: "We are the sheep of His pasture," and "the church which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). But we must bring it home to ourselves as particular and personal. We may be unable to give up all our

life, our property, our gifts, but we should be willing that He should take all and use it as He will. Yours should be the sentiments expressed in the beautiful hymn by Frances Ridley Havergal :—

Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love.  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King.  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold.  
Take my intellect, and use  
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine,  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart—it is Thine own,  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love : my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure-store.  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee !

Finally, we have to note that the third element in preparation requires not only the regeneration and spiritual discipline of the heart, but also the development of the character.

Some may overlook at once the importance and the necessity of this development. They imagine that once they are born again, and have the life of the Spirit within them, they do not need to grow. This is not the view of the Bible, nor is it that to which experience is ever more and more decidedly leading us.

In regard to the first, we know that the Bible everywhere regards this world as a spiritual nursery, where the children of God have to spend their first years in training for the higher life beyond. Hence it is full of injunctions to prosecute the religious culture of the soul, having Christ's character as your goal.

We know that experience confirms Revelation in this particular. As a matter of fact, men may grow in all moral and spiritual qualities throughout their lives. Their faith, or hope, or love, or devotion, or humility, or patience must be increasing or diminishing, getting little or great, strong or weak, to the end of their days. There is no way of coming to maturity except by growth, and surely none of us would venture to say that our present character is so good that we do not



need to be better. There must always be room for development.

How is this spiritual development of character to be secured? This is a large question, into which we can only enter on this occasion. Character is a fixed or settled order of dispositions within us. These dispositions become paramount, and tend habitually to control the will. They are established within the personality, in accordance with the rules of life commonly acted upon. The measure of any character is to be found in the prevailing disposition; the standard by which it is to be tested as good or bad is the character of our Saviour.

In accordance with the law of development, we may develop either a selfish or unselfish, a mean or benevolent, a straightforward or crooked character.

There are many influences which develop the character. These we have referred to in other connections: here we only allude to one great law which Christian workers are too ready to ignore in preparing themselves for service. It is the humble but potent law of habit. Whatever we do repeatedly tends to stereotype itself in habit, which, when formed, becomes a kind of second nature to us. This has its good as well as its evil side. It simplifies the conflict with

sin, making it easier the longer it is persevered in. It preserves what we have gained, and enables us to make progress in the way of the blessed life. Only see to it that these slowly forming dispositions are generated by the Holy Spirit.

One more question requires to be asked and answered. You may say, "Is any marked efficiency to be expected in the great body of Christian workers? Can anything more be attempted in this life than to save people, and induce them to obey the ten commandments, leaving their higher spiritual development to come hereafter? Is there any more warrant for encouraging the majority to aim at a high goal in the religious life, than there would be in urging them to the largest achievements in intellectual activity? Is religious culture after all more nearly within the reach of men than mental?"

There are unmistakable proofs of the possibility of the Holy Spirit developing high powers for Christian service among the many. If we look at the practical example of Christ, we are entitled to entertain the greatest hopefulness in this respect. He chose His disciples from among the humble fishermen of Galilee, rather than the more highly educated Jews in Jerusalem. There were other reasons for this choice, to which it is not necessary to allude. But the fact shows that

the highest effectiveness is not beyond the reach of those who have not had academic training. He gathered around Him no company of scholars, or dreamers, or talkers. He meant His followers to be workers in the various fields of Christian effort. He meant them to be the founders of a church or kingdom among men, which should perpetuate His purpose of human redemption. He Himself was a worker among workers, indefatigable in the service of the poor, the weak, the ignorant, and the sinful. Yet He spent a large portion of His time upon earth in training these followers for their future career. From this we learn that the Church of our day is under a like obligation to do its best for the workers in its midst. We are also taught that there is no reason for despairing in regard to the possibilities open to all sincere and earnest Christian workers.

Some of you will be ready to argue that the disciples of Christ were exceptional men, placed under an exceptional teacher. There is more truth in this view than many modern writers upon the subject are willing to acknowledge. But apart from special inspiration of the Spirit, and personal training by Jesus, and the good that these effected in the most unpromising material, there is no reason to go beyond the limits of our own generation for proof of what we have been

saying. We have had evangelists like Moody, heroes in philanthropy like Quarrier, and a great many more, who have been made mighty by the baptism of the Spirit, and a simple acceptance of the Bible. What has been done so often in the past may be done with equal or increased frequency in the future. It will be said, with a measure of truth, that these form no example for ordinary men. The production of such workers is not within the power of our agencies, neither is it within the compass of any of the special institutions that exist for the preparation of Christians for service. If, in the providence of God, some person is raised up, possessing an unequalled combination of consecrated energy and sagacity, the mere technical training may be dispensed with, or it can be found in unexpected quarters. Institutions and agencies exist for the average man, and it is of these we are now speaking. If we could take a census of the undeveloped powers for service of the Christian membership within all our congregations, we should be astonished at the magnitude of the forces that lie unused. If these could be brought into exercise, we should scarcely recognise ourselves, so many and varied would be the forms of Christian usefulness springing up all around. The Christian Church would pass through a second Pentecost.

In conclusion, we have to remark that preparation comes from the work of real life, as well as from the training of seminaries. He who can influence others in making bargains, can often bring souls to decision for Christ, when another breathing a milder atmosphere fails. After all, success in spiritual work comes not from official or intellectual preparation, but from earnestness and effort, knowledge of human nature, and an ineffable love for human souls. These are the working spiritual forces of the world, and they may belong to everybody. With few exceptions, the highest places of service are open to all, and to them God is summoning every disciple. Will not you enter in?

VI

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MISSION IN  
CHRISTIAN SERVICE





## VI

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MISSION IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Yet O most blessèd Spirit ! pure lamp of light,  
Eternal spring of grace and wisdom true,  
Vouchsafe to shed into my barren spirit  
Some little drop of Thy celestial dew.

EDMUND SPENSER.

IF you have been following our discussions with an attentive mind and an interested heart, you will anticipate some of the things we have to say during the next few evenings. We take it for granted that you are prepared for Christian service in accordance with the teaching of the previous lecture, and that you are remembering its true nature as not only your work with God, but God's work with you. If we are forced to choose between these descriptions, we prefer the latter. Each by itself is one-sided ; we need the two together for a full designation of Christian service. But there can be no doubt that God's part in it is infinitely more important than yours. This

is true of service in every sphere, but in Redemption the share falling to the Divine Worker is more evidently vital and indispensable than that allotted to you.

Hence it is natural that at this stage you should wish to know more about the Holy Spirit's work in Christian service. We do not think it can be so fully known, or so definitely and minutely described, as yours. Nevertheless, its purposes and methods—as well as the helps and hindrances it encounters in yourselves—may become a subject of profitable study. Nay more, it is only by knowledge of these that you can make your humble co-operation both real and effective. We therefore make no apology for devoting this and the three following lectures to the question of the Holy Spirit's *immediate co-operation* with you in service. But we warn you beforehand that at certain points the treatment must of necessity be superficial and inadequate under the circumstances in which we are met. We have no wish to carry you through the intricacies of Christian doctrine; still less do we desire to make you breathe the dusty atmosphere of polemical theology; but we must make clear once for all the objects and methods of Divine co-operation in service, and the obstacles and aids to its efficiency in yourselves and others.

In the second lecture, we saw that the Divine co-operation is of two kinds—mediate and immediate. The Holy Spirit's mediate co-operation is through special gifts at birth, and the opportunities of Christian service and training which come afterwards. This part of the subject we have already considered in Lectures III., IV., and V. The other kind of co-operation is immediate and direct, and it is that which requires to be dealt with now. When we have done that, we can be said to have taken a passing survey of the whole subject of Christian service on its higher side as God working with you.

In this lecture we have to ask one question—What is the Holy Spirit's mission in Christian service? Our answer is—Co-operation, mediate and immediate, in worship and work.

That is not by any means so narrow a representation of His mission as it may seem at first sight, for we recognise the larger and wider activity which He exercises apart from us, in Creation, Providence, and Redemption. This is amply vouched for by the teachings of Scripture and experience upon these questions. In the light of them we cannot think of a time or a place in which the Holy Spirit is not working. Addressing Him, we can say with the hymn-writer :

Thou breakest in the rushing wind,  
Thy beauty shines in leaf and flower ;  
Nor wilt Thou from the willing mind  
Withhold Thy light and love and power.

The Holy Spirit works in the operations of nature and of the human mind, in the movements of the world's history, as well as in the events and experiences of personal life. But it is equally true, and in our time more essential to remember, that He is active also in Christian service. His revealed activities within this sphere culminated in the unique manifestations of Pentecost ; and if we are to interpret the earlier by the later, the lesser by the greater, the mediate by the immediate, the indirect by the direct manifestations, we can have no hesitation in accepting co-operation as the Holy Spirit's mission in service.

Moreover, this principle is implied in many portions of Scripture, Old and New. It is expressly insisted upon in the one book of the New Testament in which the facts of Pentecost are recorded. This book, the Acts of the Apostles, has been called the Acts of the Holy Spirit, because He occupies a position of prominence in it, akin in some respects to that of Christ in the Gospels. His fellowship for service is far more than a co-operation in the ordinary meaning of that word. He uses the men who do the work,

and makes it everywhere apparent that their activities are subordinate to His. They are the instruments, He is the Agent acting through them.

This manner of regarding service is not peculiar to the Acts of the Apostles, but is found in other parts of Scripture, wherever service is mentioned. It is He who "calls" and equips the prophets, "sends forth" the preachers, and commissions workers generally to execute their work. When they are on active duty, He directs where to preach, and where not to preach. He gives the message, and He also accompanies and follows it with His blessing. In the Gospels He is said to bring all things to the remembrance of the disciples, to guide them into all truth, and to teach them how to speak, especially in the presence of persecutors. In the Epistles He is said to wield the Word as His sword, to dwell in holy men as their life and inspiration, and to be a Spirit of love and wisdom and good counsel in them that believe. It is He who moves the authors of Scripture to write of divine things, supplies the heavenly life and knowledge needed, and controls the expression of it. In all these ways, the Holy Spirit's co-operation is evidently the governing factor in service.

Another proof of this may be found in the title by which He is familiarly known in the fourth



Gospel. According to the authorised version, He is the Comforter. But as every one knows, this is an imperfect rendering of the original term. Paraclete literally describes one whom we call to our side to be our agent and adviser, our patron and advocate. As applied to the Holy Spirit in religious service, it implies that in Him we have a Divine Mentor and never-failing Friend with whom we can take counsel, and from whom we can receive Divine direction and enabling grace. In view of this, He may be regarded as pre-eminently the "Helper," which would indeed be a better translation of His favourite name. As such, He can be spoken of as *Servus servorum Dei*. The Pope appropriates this title, but it cannot be with a good conscience; for he violates it daily in spirit and practice through the pretensions of his official life and policy.

Our strict and exclusive limitation of the Holy Spirit's mission to co-operation, mediate and immediate, in worship and work, must seem more than ever unwarrantable after these supreme evidences of its importance. It is so ineffable in itself and in its effects. Inaugurated in its Pentecostal fulness by Divine descent of the Spirit into human nature, and proving itself to be a new entrance of God into humanity, and a new opening up of heaven to earth, the magnitude of the

co-operation thus offered seems disproportionate to the work requiring to be done.

If there is any feeling of this kind in your mind, the remedy is not to belittle the manifestation but to revise your ideas of the service for which it was given. We have already tried to afford you some assistance in doing this, but we must now attempt something more in the same direction. It is forced upon us by closer contemplation of the august character of the Being whose co-operation we enjoy. His motives in this Divine-human fellowship for service must be worthy of Himself, and in them we shall find relief from any remaining sense of the inadequacy of service as a mission for the Holy Spirit. We shall hail it as the most gracious and loving and beneficent work that the All-wise and All-good One could engage in. At any rate, we can be certain that no mission more blessed could be undertaken on behalf of the sinful and miserable children of men.

What then are the Holy Spirit's motives in fulfilling His immediate mission of co-operation in Christian service? What great objects does He seek to realise in it? They are three in number, as we state them here, viz., to

1. Glorify the Lord Jesus,
2. Energise His Church, and
3. Christianise the world.

But these three are ultimately one in substance ; they are intimately inter-related, and centre in Christ and His work of Redemption.

I. Let us consider] them in their order. What is it for the Spirit to glorify Jesus? We cannot answer fully here ; we can only indicate the salient points, and leave you to fill in the connecting lines.

Some speak and write as if God the Holy Spirit were, as such, the sole source of the co-operation which we enjoy in Christian service. This is not the teaching of Scripture. Nowhere do we find Him spoken of as if in it He were independent of His own saving and sanctifying work as the Father and the Son. Everywhere He presupposes this activity, and seeks to continue and complete it. In doing this, the full manifestation of His work must, from its very nature, be later in time. But in it He is carrying into execution designs which were in His mind as the Father in Creation and Providence, and as the Son in Redemption. In so far as He builds upon these foundations and strives to incorporate into human character these results, we cannot see how His special activity can be other than a sequel to what had gone before. But it is not only later in time, and a development of what had already been initiated, it goes back evermore to that for its

materials and resources. This is especially true with reference to Christ. Our Saviour defined the Holy Spirit's mission in the following terms:—"He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you" (St. John xvi. 13-15).

With respect to the Holy Spirit's testimony to Jesus, it is complete. But when we read so many learned and laborious defences of the Divine Sonship and service of Jesus, we cannot help wishing that a relatively proportionate amount of attention were bestowed upon the peculiar work of the Spirit as inaugurating a new departure in service at Pentecost. This would not interfere with the chiaroscuro of Revelation, and yet it would be an inexpressible blessing to the whole working and worshipping Church upon earth. The Holy Spirit is God working upon the souls of men. Never since the first century has the Holy Spirit, as such, been equally established in the consciousness of the Christian Church with the Father and the Son. Never have His relations to the living members of Christ's Church been as direct and personal as

they then were. Often is He acknowledged in creeds but forgotten in practice ; His name duly preserved in forms of worship while His power is ignored in daily life. Where is the intense openness and eager responsiveness to His will which we find among the early apostles ? Has the Spirit made Christ live anew in your souls as He did in theirs ? Is His co-operation the concomitant of all your efforts for the establishment and extension of Christ's kingdom among men ?

It is of no use trying to stem the present dead-set of belief in the wrong direction by going to the other extreme. We should not seek to correct one error by perpetrating another. It is not necessary to make the Holy Spirit all or nothing in service. We are not to be held as forgetting God's Divine life among men as the Son, because we uphold that of the Holy Spirit.

Nay, if the Holy Spirit dwells in us, one of the first results of His indwelling will be the glorification of Jesus. How does He do this ?

One way is by infusing a meaning into and reflecting honour upon the lowly features of Christ's incarnate life. He brings out the holy love that underlies these. The self-sacrifice and magnanimity of His meanest acts are made manifest to conscience by the Spirit. Moreover, the great love Jesus shows to men is seen to be not

that of a man, but of God in a man. When you gaze long upon the beautiful human qualities of Jesus, you become lost in admiration. His patience under provocation, His unsullied brightness in the midst of prevailing gloom, His soft invincibility and calm conquering power in the face of the onslaughts of evil, you revere as the perfect flowering of the finest humanity. You instinctively bend low before His splendid self-mastery and clear-cut conviction. You may even, in your better moments, try to imitate these. But all the while, what are you doing? You are forgetting the Divinity in that humanity. You imitate when you ought to appropriate, admire when you ought to adore. You look at a shining ideal when you ought to be opening up your heart to receive a blessing. This tendency the Holy Spirit can alone counteract. He glorifies Jesus by revealing to you the Son of God in the Son of Mary, the Divine Redeemer in the woe-begone Man of Sorrows.

If Jesus has been glorified in your thoughts, and given the chief place in your affections, the Holy Spirit has done it. After all the laudation of Jesus by the modern man, and in spite of His magnificent vindication by history, He remains a Being to whom you naturally yield an unwilling homage. The forces within you are against Him ;



the world outside you is against Him. What is bred in your bone and runs in your blood is against Him. If you have surrendered yourself to Him, it is only under the holy compulsion of the Spirit.

If there is aught beautiful in earth or sky, the sunshine brings it out. The tender light falling upon a sweet face affects our sensibilities. So is it with the Spirit and Jesus. He makes Him beautiful and attractive to men. There is a glory of the earth and a glory of the sea, a glory of the sun and a borrowed glory of the moon, a glory of the dawn and of the darkness. There are also many kinds and degrees of glory among men. The glory of Jesus is not that of the hero or of the sage, of the poet or of the priest, of the saint or of the martyr. It is the glory of the "Over-soul," of the fulness of Divine love incarnate in a single human personality. This the Holy Spirit is revealing more and more to our purblind vision.

The other way in which the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Jesus and shows them unto us, is by making Him visible habitually to the eye of faith as the Risen Master. Such a service was necessary for the first believers, and it is necessary for us. When Jesus ascended to the Father, and left His followers half dazed and half doubtful, He went up in love that He might come down in

power. The disciples were wondering what was left for them to do when He was gone ; which was it to be, nothing or everything ? Without Him they could do nothing ; with Him they were able for anything. Which was it now to be ? He came back through the Spirit to be with them as a co-worker. Christ rose to be the world's Master, and His servants' Servant. This was the great end He had in view in leaving them in the flesh, that He might return to them in the Spirit.

Nevertheless, Jesus felt that the higher life He was to live in the invisible world, and the activity He was to exercise in the visible, would not be easily comprehended. Accordingly He sent down His Holy Spirit with power into their hearts, to bring the realities of the spiritual world vividly within their mental horizon. If we are permitted to use a humble illustration of this from a recent experience of our own in sailing along the coast of Portugal it will help to make it clear. It may not be worthy of the subject, but it will make that more intelligible to some which must ever remain a mystery to all.

The land was distant, but by the light of the mid-day sun and the use of a telescope there was unveiled before our eyes a charming panorama of hill and dale, mountain and torrent, forest and green pasture, with the spires and villages dotting

the surface. We could almost see the life and form mental pictures of the activities of a people who dwelt in a land that was still strange to us. As Coleridge, by the light of genius and with the imagination of a poet, saw in Xanadu—

Gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,  
and

forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery,

so we saw Portugal and the Portuguese before ever we had put a foot within the country.

It is comparing great things with little, but it is by processes of experience distantly analogous to these that the Holy Spirit brings Christ and Heaven, with their varied life and ministry, within our ken. He empowers us to look through the eye of faith and to see the celestial landscapes, the golden cities with their gates of pearl, and the Edens where grow the trees of life and knowledge. But the true glory of Heaven is centred in Jesus, who is its King, and in the ministry of love by which He is establishing His reign upon earth from His throne in the heavens. These glories of the spiritual world are sealed to sense, but the seals are broken by the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the heart, and the hidden treasures of delight and power are revealed to faith.

These are the two main ways in which the Spirit glorifies Jesus. But in neither of them does He add anything to His essential glory as the Eternal Son. He only makes visible to us the things which are already present in Him in maturity and perfection.

This is always the Holy Spirit's procedure in fulfilling His mission. He does not take of His own, nor speak of Himself. If He did, His language would be unintelligible. His revelations would be too ethereal, too transcendent. The Divine Word has to become flesh and blood in the person of Jesus Christ. Then the Holy Spirit is able to prosecute with power His peculiar work in taking the perfections and attractions of Jesus and making them persuasive with us. It is as when a teacher uses a picture-book or object lesson for children. He descends to the level of their understanding and appeals to them through the senses. Jesus is thus made the intermediary between the Holy Spirit and our hearts.

You may remind the speaker that the Holy Spirit does not need the use of actual words when He glorifies Jesus. That is true. He can make His power known and His help available by subtler and more spiritual means, as a wise and loving friend strengthens merely by his presence. But the Holy Spirit must use truth; He must

take his stand upon reality. He does not seek to help in any magical way, nor by the might of a meaningless mystery, but through glorifying Jesus who is the truth. Therefore when He brings Him within the sanctuary of your souls, He has brought to you the innermost reality of uncreated things. He makes the Gospel spiritually alive by this means. Need we wonder then that the Holy Spirit's ministry should be so indissolubly bound up with Jesus, and that so large a part of it should be occupied in simply glorifying Him.

But the glorification of Jesus is certainly not independent of the second great object of the Holy Spirit's co-operation in service—the energising of His Church.

II. What do we mean by the expression “to energise the Church”?

Have you never thought it strange that Jesus, when he ascended to the Father, left no outward memorial of His life and work upon earth save the men and women who believed in Him? No sacred temple, no holy book, nothing but an image of Himself in their hearts and the echoes of His teaching in their memories. You say that was audacious; that was a faith in Himself and His truth which is staggering. It makes our weak heads giddy to think of it. Were the fortunes of the Kingdom of God and the fate of the

Gospel entrusted to these few feeble representatives of the Visible Church?

This is only a miserable half-truth. God's work in the world is carried on through men, but never by men alone. The Holy Spirit is the great worker. To Him are committed the highest destinies of men and to the Visible Church only under Him. He is the power that is manifested through its weakness.

The modern view of the world is prevailingly dynamical. We no longer look upon nature merely as a picture of vast dimensions and varied beauty. We know it to be a realm of forces infinite in their range and ceaseless in their activity. The scene changes, but the power which produces the change works on unremittingly towards some issue near or remote.

Society is also the home of forces and the scene of constant change. This was the Christian view of the world and of society long before it was that of science. But the power at work producing change was seen to be supernatural as well as natural. The energies were the energies of God, and just because they are His, they are also the working forces of nature. They express the Divine will and carry into execution the Divine purpose. No doubt, the complete design God is realising through them escapes the narrow and



short-sighted vision of men, but that there is a design we cannot help believing.

The Visible Church on its human side is a portion of society. In so far as it is vitally united to Christ by the Spirit, it is a community of blessed souls living the Divine life, and carrying in its bosom the highest destinies of all men and every man. It is a heavenly colony with heavenly traditions and heavenly hopes. It is the divinely constituted guardian of the faith which is destined to save and bless mankind. The truths of grace are its most precious treasure, and the life of grace is its highest privilege.

But we get the deepest and truest conception of the Christian Church when we regard it too from the dynamical point of view. It is not the kingdom whose coming Christ preached, but it is the chief instrument in realising it.

Whence is it to receive the power for this work? We saw that ultimately the problems of nature and life are problems of power. So it is in Christian service. This is the meaning of the general title "The Holy Spirit and Christian Service." One of the keys to the meaning of history secular and sacred is to be found in realising that our earth is the arena of a constant warfare between the two great powers of good and evil, of light and darkness, of belief in God and

unbelief. In this holy war there is no truce. That is the tremendous fact which challenges us as Christian workers. This warfare may not be carried on with the thunders and lightnings of our pitched battles, but the struggle is none the less real and intense because it is not fought with carnal weapons and with a view to carnal victories. We cannot draw aside the curtain of mystery which hides from our eyes the spiritual drama. We cannot solve the riddle of life, the mystery of evil. But we must regard the Church's work upon earth as a warfare—and that of each generation within it as one campaign in the stupendous struggle. The crisis and turning-point is the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The power of evil was broken when the risen Christ, bursting the fetters of death and the grave, put Himself at the head of the Visible Church, and declared that by its means the world was to be brought back to its lost allegiance. The little band of heroic Apostles was the embryo of the Christian Church which waited to be born from above by the power of the Spirit.

What is true of the Church is true of every living member of it. Our hearts are the meeting-place and the battle-ground of two worlds. The agencies of good and evil, of heaven and hell, contend within us for the mastery. At certain times

you may be only dimly conscious of the conflict, but you know that upon its issue depends your highest welfare for time and eternity.

Where is the power to come from which is to give the Church the victory in this struggle? It is not from its numbers, or its wealth, or its organisation. It is not from the learning of its ministers or the wisdom of its teachers or the policy of its ecclesiastics. These things cannot succour men and women tempted by the wiles of the Evil One. They cannot strengthen the weak to stand in the evil day. They cannot rescue the fallen and recover the lost. Still less can they change a heart or renew a broken character and cleanse a polluted life. It was long believed that physical power might be used in bringing men to Christ. Christians persecuted in Christ's name and made the most cruel use of superior strength in the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. But whatever results of an enduring kind have followed the use of physical power among lower races, it is certain that it alone never really converted any man. Even intellectual power cannot do this. Whether it take the form of logical preaching or rhetorical appeal, it is doomed to fail unless accompanied by the power of the Spirit.

The reason of this failure is very simple. The change which must be effected is a change of

heart. New light in the intellect is not enough ; there must be new life in the soul. This new life must be spiritual, and it can come only from a spiritual source. It is the Holy Spirit's mission to supply this living spiritual power to the Church for its worship and work.

Pentecost was God's full and final answer to this perennial need of the Church. On that day the Church was born anew into the world and endowed with a power which it has never wholly lost amid all the changes of its history. In these Spirit-filled men the dross of earthliness was consumed and their souls were set aburning with a new love of the risen Christ and of the fallen men and women for whom He died. The answer was then given to the world-old problem—How are the dead in sin to be made alive unto righteousness? Plato and Aristotle in the ancient world distressed themselves to know whence the virtue-making power in human life was to be had. Cotter Morrison in modern times practically gives up the hope of ever finding such power. The Christian Church, if true to its Master, should be demonstrating continually the power of the Spirit who dwells in her to solve this very difficulty which presses so painfully upon some good men of little faith and less spiritual insight.

But what is this mysterious power which

accrues to the Christian Church from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? We can scarcely reach its essence by analysing it.

The truths of grace so abundant in Revelation are powerful in themselves. They are in one aspect like the "*idées forces*" of Alfred Fouillée, the greatest of living French thinkers. They exert moral force upon those who sincerely believe them. They have a close, a direct and unchanging relation to action. Some of them are almost spontaneously convertible into high motives for conduct. They are full of the light of life, and would readily run into holy deeds, if there were nothing in us to prevent them.

But they are only converted into power when they find a lodgment in believing hearts and sincere minds. Faith in them when simple and strong, intelligent and unwavering, is a great source of power. It is the substance and life-blood of all activity distinctively Christian. An unflinching devotion to spiritual ends which does not hesitate before self-sacrifice in the attainment of them, is power. The courage of men resolved at all costs to do the right and to speak what is true, is power. Personal love to Christ and His cause is powerful in proportion to its intensity, and captivating through its sweet unselfishness. Above all, the habitual association of earth with heaven,

whither Christ has gone, is a power calculated to steadily carry our life to the highest issues and make it more like His.

We do not say that the disciples whom Christ trained had not these elements of Christian character and spiritual power before He left them, but they were not conspicuously active in them. Their faith was weak and crude and carnal in comparison with what it afterwards became. Their religious knowledge was low and limited, rudimentary in its nature and traditional in its content. They lacked moral courage. Their personal love to Christ was genuine and undoubted, but, through its mixture with other elements, it failed them on the eve of the Crucifixion. They were dispersed, dispirited, and despondent, until the news of Christ's resurrection and the evidences of its reality reunited and reanimated them.

Indeed, the change produced upon them by the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost was so extraordinary as to be altogether miraculous. We do not wonder that the disciples were commanded to remain at Jerusalem until they were endued with power; but we confess that the Spirit when He did come upon them wrought such a transformation as could be accounted for by no other cause. Even if their new faith and courage had long been present in a germinating form, the sudden



ripening of these germs into a phenomenal fulness and fruitfulness cannot be naturally explained. Only the influence of the Spirit could awaken their slumbering faculties and restore their lost fidelity. They who deserted their Master in the hour of danger never afterwards proved unfaithful to His cause or disloyal to His memory. Thenceforth they never feared the face of man if the honour or the interests of Christ's Kingdom were at stake. But this negative way of putting it gives but a meagre impression of the fire that burned in their veins, and the fortitude that emboldened them in the face of all opposition. They were like men whose characters had been cast in bronze—so fearless were they in their spiritual integrity. The weak had become strong, cowards were changed into heroes, and deserters died martyrs. A church composed of such units might be small in numbers, but it was sure to be powerful in converting men and establishing them in the faith.

Still we have done little more than touch upon the mightiest secret of the power of the primitive Church in Christian Service. The Spirit that entered into them was the Spirit of Jesus, the spirit of holy love. Therein lay its conquering and subduing power over others. We are apt to think of the Father and the Son as the exclusive sources of the infinite love that finds expression

in Redemption. But we ought to remember that the Spirit Himself loves us. He yearns over men with groanings of regret for the hardness and coldness of their hearts. He is sorely grieved by their indifference. The desire to save men and sanctify them tortures His heart when it is thwarted. This is the picture of Him that we have in the Epistles.

The differences between the Holy Spirit and the Father and Son in loving, are only differences of manifestation. The Father shows His love by creating us and caring for our individual wants; the Son dies out of love for us that the full tide of His free grace may reach and save us. But the Holy Spirit's love is a communicating love. He entered into human nature because there was no way of imparting to us the fulness of spiritual power for service unless He Himself were in it. The precious things that the Father prepared and the Son secured for us are made ours by the effectual application of them to our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

But some of you will say, If the central passion of the Holy Spirit's heart be such an all-absorbing desire for the good of men, why was He so long in showing it? Why was it so late in history before He came into our life in the plenitude of His power?

The reason is simple and obvious. The fault is not in God. It lies in us. He has always been working to find an entrance into our pre-occupied hearts ; but His work as the Father and the Son in Redemption had to be completed before He could make His power fully available for us.

The manifestation of the Spirit's power as essentially the same as the holy love of Jesus was therefore necessarily progressive. At first it was small because there was little receptivity in men. But though it had humble beginnings, it was never entirely absent, and was from the first destined to grow in fulness and force, in height and depth, as well as comprehensiveness and spiritual power. We cannot stop to trace its course ; we can only say that as a power for service it grew from little to great and from less to more, as men were able to receive it. Those servants who came earlier had, generally speaking, less. Christ had most of all, for to Him the Spirit was given without measure. In Him Holy Love was incarnate.

We have indications of this progressive manifestation in the common types and emblems that are such favourites with you in your work of preaching :—"the Promised Seed," "the Riven Rock," "the Resuscitating Manna," "the Uplifted Serpent," "the Suffering Servant," the Sin and other

Offerings. Throughout Scripture some of these types, and that of the Redeeming Lamb, recur again and again, each time with a fuller content. In Christ all types and figures of Holy Love are realised. In Him they pass into great and ever-living spiritual realities—the fountains of immortal hope and grace for sinful men. But even Jesus Himself, the perfect symbol of Holy Love in an earthly form, ascended to the Father. The Holy One in the flesh passed away, but the Holy One in the Spirit abides with His faithful Church for ever.

The same progressive spiritual power is evident in the service which the Holy Spirit enables the Church to render. At first its worship was simple, and offered mostly in rites which appealed to the senses—the smoking altar-flame pointing the hearts and thoughts of men upwards to God, and forward to the perpetual sacrifice. But, however slowly, there is manifest an advance in the Church's worship from outward and visible acts to inward and invisible, from the material type to the spiritual reality which it represents.

But if that be true of worship as part of the Church's service, it is equally true of work. The works of the law were comparatively external and ceremonial; the works of grace are more internal and spiritual. The commandments consist for the most part of particular prohibitions, fettering the

hands rather than restraining the heart. They are cast in the imperative form as we speak to children, without reasons annexed or the general principles they embody being stated, developed, and applied. By and bye, in Christ, we live under grace, and not under the Law. We are guided by the inspirations of God's free Spirit. His presence is both more searching and more inclusive than any outward law, for He takes up into Himself all our earthly life, inward as well as outward.

This progressive manifestation of the Spirit in us for service has been dependent, as we have seen, upon two things: the sovereign will of God, and the state of preparedness in man; for the Holy Spirit in working submits to conditions, otherwise we could not co-operate with Him. Even the Incarnation was an accommodation to the necessities of our nature—a submission to the limitations of time and space—that the Divine grace might become the common property of mankind through faith. This preparatory work had to be done before the Holy Spirit could fully come. But with Christ's Ascension and the Descent of the Spirit, the barrier to the full manifestation of power for service was finally removed. Then, with an historically complete Gospel, the Church could be endued with its proper energy by the presence within it of the Indwelling Spirit.

III. But the energising of the Church was for the Christianising of the world.

This great design was entailed upon the Church from the beginning that it might go down with it from age to age, and from one generation of men to another ; and amid all its lapses the Church of Jesus has never entirely fallen from its Founder's great commission, never quite falsified its missionary character. Even before the close of the Apostolic era, when the halo of immediate communion with Christ still hung round the workers, it could almost be said of them "that their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

Nor could this success be attributed to the worldly power or learning of the preachers or the wealth of their followers. While they were still poor and obscure the Christian Church undermined the power of the greatest and most highly organised heathen empire that the world had ever known. The most glorious of the witnesses for Jesus were not clad in lawn or robed in purple ; they were not under the patronage of any temporal power, but relied upon the Holy Spirit in service. In these days the Church was like a magnet which attracted to itself what was truest and purest and noblest in heathen life. Even after its youthful ardour declined, it increased in dominion until it grasped



supremacy, and by subduing the rough Goths laid the foundations of modern civilisation in Europe.

After the Reformation and repeated revivals the Church awoke from its ever-recurring torpor, like a giant refreshed with wine, and again and again entered upon a missionary career, the splendour of which has been often eclipsed but never extinguished. Our own century has witnessed the creation and use of more missionary machinery than any of the previous fifteen.

From Pentecost we date a new era in Christian service. Since that experience the Holy Spirit has wrought in a different way and upon a different scale for the Christianisation of the world. With the entrance of the living God into the souls of men we have different results. We have not only witnessed the enthronement of Christ in the hearts of humanity, and the energising of the Christian Church through the Spirit filling it ; but as a consequence we have also had a universal distribution of the Spirit's power for service. Formerly the servants of Jehovah were few in number ; but at Pentecost the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh. Peter, quoting God's words to Joel, and applying them to the nascent Christian Church, declared : "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams : yea and on my

servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit ; and they shall prophesy " (Acts ii. 17, 18). Pentecost was veritably come when these words could be regarded as fulfilled in the experience of the men and women around him.

Both sexes, all ages, and all classes began to enjoy a new fulness of the Spirit's power for service. That was a wonderful advance, and it marks the most notable stage in the spiritual development of mankind. How significant were the outward signs by which it was accredited !

In the " sound as of a rushing wind," and " the tongues like as of fire " distributing themselves among the Apostles, and in their filling with the Holy Spirit, a new and final dispensation was begun, and the complete regeneration of the world was significantly heralded.

That rushing mighty wind has already carried away much of the cloud-rack of sin and superstition that darkened the atmosphere of the human soul, and obstructed the light of the Sun of Righteousness. With this clearing process we have had an extraordinary communication of spiritual power and efficiency in service, from which each generation of workers benefits.

Moreover, instead of the elect few serving God like solitary torch-bearers in an obscure throng, we

have clusters of luminaries in churches and nations. The undistinguished many are not unfrequently found working with God. Upon men rescued from a life of sin the tongues of mystic flame have descended; upon women the holy fire has been cast, and their souls have been enveloped in a more than vestal purity and brightness. Upon men of genius like Augustine and Savonarola, Luther and John Knox, the crown of sacred fire has rested, and they have become spiritual kings deriving their royalty direct from God. Upon churches that have passed through the fires of martyrdom the Spirit has fallen, and the meanest of their members have been touched with the majesty of the Almighty God. Everything has been melted by this fire; the rockiest hearts have become like molten lava, ready to be run into the heavenly moulds.

This inspiration for service has not been given for local ends or a limited time. God, "who has made of one blood all nations," purposes also to redeem them through the blood of One. The Holy Spirit is not to be restricted within boundaries of men's making. He overleaps the divisions of church and empire. His sphere is as broad as humanity, and nothing human can be beyond His reach. The river of spiritual blessing which burst through so many obstacles at Pentecost will yet widen its channels and quicken its flow and in-

crease its volume, until it spreads out into all lands and brings spiritual life to every plant of grace in every soil of privilege.

Nor shall the temporal mission of the Holy Spirit in service be exhausted until the kingdom of God comes upon the earth and Christ returns to reign. Time and change are helpless against the Eternal Spirit. Language and speech are plastic to the tongue of fire. Age cannot wither, nor sex weaken the Spirit's power. Class and condition cannot wall up His love. Even sin and the spirit of evil shall find their age-long dominion over all flesh disputed, if not destroyed. The densest mists of ignorance, the most fatal miasmas of falsehood and the reek of social corruption shall one day be swept away by the winds let loose at Pentecost. For the kingdom of God, whose coming Christ preached, is that reign of the Holy Spirit in men which will yet unite them, as children to their Father in heaven, as citizens to their crucified but risen King, and as brethren to all mankind for Jesus' sake.



VII

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S METHOD IN  
CHRISTIAN SERVICE





## VII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S METHOD IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

. . . Glimmering all the dead  
Looked upon Jesus ; as they stood, some thought  
Spread from the furthest edges like a breeze,  
Till like a leafy forest, the huge host  
Whispered together, bending all one way  
Toward Him.

STEPHEN PHILIPS.

ON the previous occasion when we last met we considered the Holy Spirit's Mission in Service. It was described as co-operation in worship and work for certain specified ends. These were (1) to glorify Jesus ; (2) to energise His Church ; and (3) to Christianise the world. No objects could be more worthy of the forthputting of the highest divine energies. Only when we have exhausted the manifold significance of attaining these objects can we claim to have comprehended the temporal mission of the Holy Spirit in Service.

To-night we are face to face with a new if

related problem—the Holy Spirit's Method of fulfilling His Mission as illustrated by His work in the world, the church, and the individual ; and man's relation to it.

As method is a somewhat novel term in this connection, it may be well to state precisely what we mean by it. It expresses our conviction that the Holy Spirit follows a fixed and regular course in saving and sanctifying men for service. From reasons fully known to Himself, and with a consideration very helpful to us, His procedure is according to a method which it behoves us to recognise and respect. Experience and observation show that He has deliberately adopted certain processes or ways of acting upon human nature for the realisation of His mission. What these processes are and our relation to them we hope to set forth now in as few and simple words as possible.

It is fitting that in addressing an audience of Christian workers we should say something about the divine method of working. If God is to work with you, you should know His method as well as His motive in service. That is not so easy to find out as it may seem at first sight. It is complicated with many side issues that are tantalisingly difficult to solve. It taxes the patience of an inquirer. His powers of thinking must be sharp,

sane, and spiritual, if he is not to get entangled in the meshes of his own meditations. The psychological pathway to truth in such questions is beset with snares for a biassed judgment or a faltering will. Moreover, the history of the discussion is encumbered with a mass of matter which would strain the mental digestion of the veriest intellectual glutton that ever batted upon dead men's ideas. In these circumstances you must not expect from us more than a rough and ready answer to the problem of the Holy Spirit's method in service. If it meets your practical wants as workers we shall be content.

But there is a preliminary point to settle. Many deny that the Holy Spirit has a methodical way of working upon or in us. They think it presumptuous to suggest such a thing. They regard it either as impugning the divine sovereignty and freedom, or as effacing our personal responsibility. We are thus supposed to be impaled upon one or other of the horns of a dilemma.

Without entering upon this old and inexhaustible controversy we may be permitted to make some passing remarks upon its practical aspects.

We have to admit at the outset that there is among Christian workers an undue tendency to expect uniformity in the divine method of operation. They sometimes speak and act as if all

souls were to be forced through absolutely the same states and stages of experience in conversion and sanctification. They thereby confound the accidental with the essential, and fail to make allowance for that divine variety in working which the diversity of human temperament and history necessitates.

It is also an error in judgment to identify the Holy Spirit too exclusively with certain methods which are excellent enough in themselves, but not applicable without exception to all cases. The sacramentarian bigot who limits the channels of grace to the baptismal font or the eucharist, etc., is to be condemned ; but so also is the evangelical zealot who thinks that salvation is to be found only in the inquiry room. We believe that God works savingly in other ways. It would be of evil omen for the great sinning, suffering world if quiet transformations of the heart and life did not take place under the ministry of the gospel in church, or the influence of Christian example in the home.

We have two more protests to make of a similar character. We have known earnest Christians prone to interpret and pass judgment upon the religious experience of fellow-Christians solely according to the narrow and threadbare formulas which express their own. We have no

authority to do this either from the letter or from the spirit of Holy Scripture. No one man's mode of passing through the mighty change can be taken in detail as a pattern for every other.

The like holds true of sanctification as a process of personal experience. In the words of Owen one may say "it admits of degrees." It is "carried on gradually." This being so, it stands to reason that there may be different stages of holiness and different rates of progress in it, without giving any one the right to say that the experience of another is invalid or unreal because it does not conform in every particular to his own. Such minor and incidental differences are not vital to the final result, and therefore no sweeping judgment of that kind can be made on the strength of them.

You may say that we are inconsistent in thus inveighing against the prevalent tendency among workers to look for uniformity in the method of the Holy Spirit's working in men, while we are devoting the rest of this lecture to that very subject. We have to say in reply that in these remarks we are discouraging the abuse but not forbidding the use of method in Christian service. We think the reaction against it has gone to too great a length. There are indeed grave dangers threatening us from this quarter.

A few men of volatile genius and varied culture,



with a host of imitators, are averse to all definiteness in religious belief. They rebel against every attempt to methodise the divine working within the soul. There is often a lofty ethical temper in their tirades against the tyranny of theological system, but this attitude of mind, if persisted in, is apt to bring evil in its train. When carried to its extreme logical issue, it puts an end to fortitude in faith and fertility in practice. Let us invest the higher region of the soul's life with all due and true mystery, and the Holy Spirit Himself with the halo of the divine and heavenly; but let us also beware of coquetting with "the spirit that denies," or neglecting the hoard of holy lore which comes down to us in well-compacted creeds and theologies. A fanfare in favour of spiritual freedom often heralds a deeper change. It is then but a prelude to the entrance of the Agnostic spirit with its devil's dialectic as a plea for a devout despair of things divine.

Be it said with reverence, we have neither a lunatic's idea of God nor a materialist's conception of man. The Holy Spirit's activities in our view are neither lawless nor irrational in their exercise, and we are not mere clay from our centre in conscience to our circumference in space. To us it is clear that if there be spontaneous communications of grace from God to us, these will be made

in accordance with the permanent necessities of the two related beings—man and God. This is the key to the supreme method of the Holy Spirit in service as we conceive it.

What, then, are the permanent necessities of the two beings, God and man, brought together by the mission of the Holy Spirit? They are respectively those of giving and receiving, communicating and appropriating.

The Holy Spirit is by nature not only holy and spiritual in Himself, He is the Author of holiness and spirituality in us. Herein lies the reason for His peculiar name. The Father is holy and spiritual; so also is the Son. But their special work in creation, providence, and redemption is sufficiently indicated by these names, while the complementary title of Holy Spirit is given to Him who fulfils the complementary office of working into human character the results of their activity. His is therefore essentially a ministry of communication as Christ's was one of reconciliation. He came to dwell in and work within all who were ready to receive Him. He comes as a Spirit to our spirit that He may make us spiritual, and as the Holy Spirit that He may make us holy. These are the permanent necessities of His nature.

That which the Holy Spirit is anxious to give

is precisely what it is most necessary we should receive if we are to fulfil our true vocation in life. But, to begin with, we are by nature unspiritual and unholy. No doubt, as men, we are made in the divine image, with capacities and powers connecting us in an incipient community of inward life with our Creator. The blessedness, however, of a childlike innocence has been long ago lost through sin, with its inevitable entail of misery. An awful cloud has come between our hearts and God, preventing the upward look of faith, darkening our vision of the true life, intercepting our communion with heaven, and disturbing the heart's peace. We are in danger of completely forgetting the higher destiny to which we are called by our superiority of nature and origin, and inclined to live the life of an earth-born creature. Christ's work as a Saviour is to change all this. But it is frustrated by our unspirituality of nature and unholiness of life. These it is the Holy Spirit's mission to remove. He has to impart the essential attributes of His own nature in regenerating and sanctifying us. In doing this He adopts (humanly speaking) some such method as we are now to explain in outline.

I. The Holy Spirit's method of work in the world, the church, and the individual.

What is this method? It consists essentially

of a double process of breaking and making which goes on in human nature under the action of the Holy Spirit—the breaking of the carnal nature being conducted with a view to the making of the spiritual, so that the resultant new life may be used by the Holy Spirit in Christian service.

The beginning of this process is the bringing of the Holy Spirit and the human heart into real contact. That which keeps them separate is in us, not in God. Whatever it be it must be made to give way—it must be broken if the Holy Spirit is to do His work. Vicious passion or depraved appetite, worldly-mindedness or presumption and pride, unbelief in Christ or unwillingness to submit to His claims, will effectually prevent His entrance into us. But even when the outward life is absolutely blameless there may be prejudice begotten of ignorance, or of the natural indisposition to come face to face with God, which has the same effect so far as the commencement of the process of regeneration is concerned.

Now there are great differences in the way in which the Holy Spirit overcomes these obstacles and reaches the heart. Sometimes it will be by a long process of gracious and providential preparation; at other times by a sudden and abrupt and even unexpected irruption into the very centre of

a man's being and willing. But by whichever way the Holy Spirit accomplishes His purpose, the issue is the same. The barrier of sinful habit or enmity of disposition must be broken down if the contact between the Holy Spirit and our heart is to be real.

These differences reveal themselves upon the largest scale when we look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, the church, and the individual.

If we begin with His work in the world it is not because it best illustrates His method. On the contrary, that can be seen to advantage most clearly in the individual. But it is fitting that we should begin with His widest sphere, and gradually approach that which is narrower but more important for our purpose. If we could imagine the world, the church, and the individual as represented on this page by three concentric circles, we are to deal with the outermost first in the briefest possible way.

The classical passage of Scripture which sets forth the Holy Spirit's work in the great world is in St. John's Gospel (xvi. 8-11), where Christ promises that the Holy Spirit, "when He is come, will convict *the world* in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin," He says, "because they believe not on Me; of

righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." The world here is not to be taken as referring, of course, to material nature, though the Spirit is the ultimate cause of things material as well as of conscious beings. The reference is to mankind at large rather than to men as individuals, and it may be interpreted in a cosmic and historic sense as implying, or at least not forbidding the idea, that the Spirit deals somehow with every human spirit concerning sin and righteousness independently of His work as Creator and Sustainer. There may be even a glance back at the method in which sin has been brought out into the universal moral consciousness, and righteousness made a reality to the universal mind of man.

In order to bring the Holy Spirit into immediate relation with, and direct activity upon, the human heart, a long and varied process was needed. That, however, for the most part, falls within the scope of the mediate and indirect co-operation of the Holy Spirit in man's moral and spiritual development. We do not therefore concern ourselves with it here, but along with this general process of providential preparation there has been a preparation of grace in the hearts of



chosen individuals for special emergencies and higher necessities of service connected with the progress of the race in spirituality and holiness. We can observe the method of God's working better in these eminent individuals than in the undistinguished mass of multitudinous personalities. We have no doubt that the same method prevailed more or less in all, but we have means of tracing it in the one case that we have not in the other. Besides, if we entered upon the problem of God's method of working upon the human race generally, we should have to launch into a philosophy of history which we have no intention of doing. But we are satisfied that the work of the Holy Spirit in these pioneers of spirituality and holiness was not essentially different from that in individuals generally, and it will fall to be considered under that head.

We next come to discuss in a very cursory way the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church but we may explain that by the word Church, here, we do not mean to refer to any one body of organised Christians, but to all in their associate capacity in whom the Spirit is doing His higher work. As might be expected, the work of the Spirit in the Church is deeper and more thorough than in the world. Here He delights to dwell; here His heart has its home; here He finds less

to impede and limit His holy energies for the salvation and sanctification of men.

Nevertheless the Church in the world, like unregenerate human nature, has always that in her elements and forces which requires to be broken if her true life is to find fuller and fuller expression as the ages pass. Her corporate existence is made up of members whose natures are in part unrenewed. She has those within her pale who are not of her—that is to say, the Holy Spirit has no living share in their lives and no spiritual revenue from their activities. If these are they who give the tone to her life and the direction to her policy then the Holy Spirit must pass through such a church as a breaking and transforming power before He can use her in His service.

It is the holiness of the Spirit and the necessity constraining Him to communicate His holiness to us, which are the motives originating and sustaining the process we have spoken of as a breaking of the old nature preliminary to the making of the new. The persecutions of the Church by the world, and the fiery trials and infirmities which have always menaced her existence, are some of the means which the Holy Spirit has used to humble and subdue her to His purposes. A martyr, John Spreull, was imprisoned on the Bass

Rock (a spot not three miles from the place where this lecture was written) for his faithfulness to the truth. He had as the motto of his crest in Latin the words, "I grow under a weight." The Church of Christ in every age might adopt the same principle as one of the secrets of her life and power. Trouble and suffering from her own indwelling sin as well as from the enmity of the world, have been like God's flails to her, separating the corn from the husk, the chaff from the wheat. Moreover, since sin and the soul never meet as strangers or chance acquaintances, the severance of the two may need many blows and some stern dealing with before the changelessly holy demands of God are satisfied.

But here, too, the process of breaking has always been united with the more wonderful process of making. When the Church has stubbornly refused to receive the teaching which God thus desired to impress upon her, its reception has been helped by the simultaneous activity of the Spirit upon susceptible hearts within her border. He it is who has also brought Christ's words to their remembrance—clothing them with new meanings and fresh power for ever new needs. Neglected truths dear to Jesus are to-day being brought home to our minds in living forms by His Spirit; and the same process we may be sure will con-

tinue in the future. We have further a promise that the Church will one day be guided into all the truth as it is in Jesus. This is a marvellous prospect pregnant with rich possibilities, but we should be thankful meanwhile that the Holy Spirit blesses churches even when they have only an imperfect mastery of the fulness of Divine truth hidden in the Saviour. We may also hold this promise as a pledge of the perpetual presence of the Spirit of Truth in the Church, making her equal at all times and in all circumstances to the demands upon her.

Beyond a doubt the method of the Holy Spirit receives fullest illustration through His work in the individual. The more contracted the sphere, the more manifest is the exhibition of the Spirit's potencies and purposes within it. Moreover, He lives and works in the individual in ways which were utterly impossible to Him in the world or even in the Church.

There must be extraordinary differences in the inner life of men if we are to judge by their outward conduct. The Scriptures teach us that these differences arise from the different treatment which they give to the Holy Spirit. He is always pressing in towards their heart of hearts, always anxious to make them spiritual and holy like Himself. He has got some hold of everybody

through conscience. That is enough to make them uncomfortable when they do wrong, but not enough to change their heart and life without a special work of grace. It is with this particular presence in the individual that we are now to be occupied for a short while.

His work is set forth in Revelation under a great variety of figures. Sometimes water and at other times fire is the symbol used. Yet again we have Christ Himself in His remarkable interview with Nicodemus comparing the Spirit's work upon the heart to the wind blowing in the world without. All these have a common teaching for us, and it warrants the use of one figure more in this lecture.

Both breaking and making imply that the Holy Spirit is in contact with the human heart. Obstructions have either been removed or surmounted. If the incoming Spirit be thought of for a moment as a fire, then He has consumed the unholy and unspiritual things that infest the inward life of the heart and prevent His reaching it.

After the contact has been made, the immediate effect will be dependent upon our faith or want of faith. If the issue prove that we have faith, and that our faith is of the right kind, then it must have been wrought in us by the Holy Spirit Himself. Such a faith as unites vitally to Christ is never a wholly natural endowment. We are none

of us embryo saints. Our first and our second birth never actually coincide. Faith of the true quality is always foreign to us by nature. God's Spirit alone can create it. It is the first-fruit of His action in any heart. If the other activity can be spoken of as the Spirit's breaking of the natural man, this is the commencement of the correlative process—His making of the new man in Christ Jesus.

When the convicting or breaking experience leads to a changed life, our faith must be resting upon a right basis. One of the profoundest and most original revelations in the Bible is that such a conviction cannot spring from consciousness of an evil tendency in our nature without some knowledge of the Christ. The ground of the condemnation must be our unbelief of Christ and the heart's rejection of Him. Hence, as seen in the last lecture, the first object of the Holy Spirit's mission is attained by glorifying Jesus. It is in contrast with His spotless perfection and snow-white purity that we are savingly convicted of sin. The occasion of the sense of sin arising is some particular action, but the condemnation itself is never based upon a single act but upon a state of the heart out of which the act springs. Conviction, if it is genuine and destined to be fruitful of change, must penetrate to the seat of



evil, and not merely touch one or other of its many fringes and manifestations. In order to get down to the heart it must be driven home by the overwhelming force of the Holy Spirit as mediated through Christ, and through Christ alone.

The right ground of self-condemnation may be reached, but if the breaking takes place in a heart that is not united by a living faith to God in Christ the consequences are evil, and evil only. If there be no renewing action of the Holy Spirit making us sensitive to divine things, there can be no genuine repentance for sin in itself, but only for its consequences. If these do not bring punishment upon ourselves, there is then no regret for its occurrence. If the deed can be done and no more heard of it, if the lie can be told and never discovered, if the vice can be secretly indulged, then there will be no penitence for it. We know, however, that the guilt lies not chiefly in the outward consequences, and that the sorrow for it should not be mere chagrin and disappointment—showing itself in tears of pride or self-will. The deed should be accounted wrong in itself and an offence against God. Only then can the results be other than disastrous for the soul. If the regrets be simply those of the shallow and transitory kind, they may harrow the heart and waste its strength and sweetness. They may

furrow the face and leave traces of bootless grief. They may whiten the hair, but in doing this they do not whiten the soul. The stony heart—even if it be broken into a thousand fragments—is still stony in its brokenness. The pride is not humbled nor the false confidence crushed. We stand aghast before the pathos of our human weakness—while we remain sullen and obdurate—cherishing hard thoughts of God and man. The unrenewed heart is never softened nor the rebellious feelings quelled except by the healing and life-giving vision of the crucified Christ, and the appropriation of His atoning suffering as endured for us and our salvation. Then our fellowship in His suffering, if such it is, will be a privilege and not a penance. The pain will be a blessing—a means of chastening and subduing the evil heart of unbelief, correcting the error of the mind, and weaning the affections from the love of sin. It thus leaves behind in the character an abiding spiritual good. Is it not Alfred de Musset who somewhere says that sorrows make the good better and the bad worse?

If on the other hand the Divine breaking is accompanied with a Divine making, the conviction of sin will issue in conversion to God. The shadows of despair and death will make way for the morning of hope and joy and life eternal. It

is a perilous thing to be haunted night and day by the gloomy terrors of remorse and the voices of coming doom. We must have a way of escape from these tormenting memories and torturing self-reproaches. If we cannot have this deliverance, the awakening of a sense of sin within the soul is a curse and not a blessing, a cruelty and not a kindness, a tocsin of hell, not a gracious warning of heaven. But the Holy Spirit not only breaks our guilty connection with the past through applying to our hearts the blood of Christ, He establishes a new and blessed relation to the future, and creates within us the germ of a really spiritual character and of a holy life.

Victor Hugo calls attention in a striking way to the profound silence which reigns a few feet below the ground in contrast with the noise and turmoil above its surface. In like manner when this deep heart-work is being done by the Spirit there is a holy calm within, and a stillness that might be felt. It is often said that the giant oak whose leaves and topmost branches are rudely shaken by the gusty fury of the hurricane, is thereby more firmly rooted in the earth. It is not the shaking by the agitated air alone that does this work, but also the silent and secret processes which go on in the hidden depths of earth. So is it in the experience of the soul.

The visible agitation of the emotions with loud crying and tears is not always a measure of the change being wrought in the centre of moral and spiritual life. But there may be great variety in feeling, and noise in expressing it, when there is entire unity and quietness in the Divine working by which the change itself is produced.

The processes of breaking and making do not come to an end with conversion. There is a new beginning ; and though henceforth the changes are not of the same radical and revolutionary order as the initial change was, yet the spiritual development is not carried on without the help of the same two processes. The breaking comes from the losses and crosses that are inevitable in the earthly life of all—whether believers or unbelievers—the making includes those accessions of grace or reinforcements of strength and wisdom, holiness and goodness, truth and love, which come from communications of the Holy Spirit to the soul in sanctification.

The breaking is necessary to separate the good from the evil in our character. If we were asked to condense into four words the substance of the Bible and the burden of its message, the words we should choose would be unspirituality and unholiness together with spirituality and holiness. To make man spiritual and holy is its one

great aim. However much the Bible may comfort you, unless it effects these changes you have missed the first and chief purpose of its Divine Author. Breaking is the process which figuratively sets forth one side of this relation between God and the human soul in refining the affections, purifying the motives, and rescuing the precious elements of the soul's life from the base alloy and drossy intermixture of indwelling sin. Outside cleansing is not enough : there must be inward changes in the character.

Making is no less necessary than breaking. Nothing that is genuine or of abiding value will be lost in the process of breaking, but there must be positive additions of Divine grace before the new man of the heart can be built up in true spirituality and holiness. Sanctification is not a mere educational process—a cultivation of that in us which is already good, or the unfolding of latent tendencies to the spiritual and holy. It is also a gift as well as a process—a continued giving and not only an evolving of that which is already given. Indeed it culminates in Christ giving Himself to the believer to dwell in him—reigning in his affections, ruling in his will, and gradually possessing his whole nature through the Spirit.

This reception of Christ necessitates a breaking of the old self so complete that the Apostle Paul

speaks of it as self-crucifixion. The reason for this extreme brokenness is to be found in the fact that sin is the outcome of the power abiding within the unholy carnalism which is naturally in possession of the personal "me." In virtue of that we make self the centre of our life, not Christ. This tendency is the deep spring of every outbreak of evil. Hence if Christ is to be first and self second, there must be a destruction of the old life before there can be a creation of the new. This is the meaning of dying to the flesh that we may live to the Spirit.

But again the breaking is coupled with the process of making, though at this stage it enters upon a higher range and a fuller development. "I have been crucified with Christ," says Paul; "yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20). This is the final stage in the communication of spirituality and holiness when the Divine Christ comes and dwells in us by the Spirit, to control our whole moral life and transfigure our entire being. We have then not merely the nature of sons and the true feeling of sonship created in us; but Christ Himself in the glory of His heavenly life is miraculously born



anew and formed within the heart—becoming our holiness and our true self. Our own personality is so interwoven with His that they are identical. Our power is His power in us, and our efforts are the putting forth of His strength.

This marks the concluding stage of the Holy Spirit's work in us upon earth. If the body dominated the spirit before the work began, it will in the end be subject to it, and the spirit itself be under the dominion of the Divine Spirit, and Christ be all in all. But this high consummation is associated with the final coming "of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."

II. Man's relation to the Holy Spirit's method in working.

If we look first at the Holy Spirit's method of working in the world we see how hard it is to draw the line and to say exactly what part man has in the processes of breaking and making through which progress in spirituality and holiness has been secured. Is there anything due to the action of those God-implanted capacities and energies which are the presupposition of our moral and religious life; or is everything essentially the outcome of the immediate action of the Holy Spirit upon our nature? Opinion and belief have been greatly divided in all ages upon this intricate problem. Many men of religious

genius attribute practically everything to direct divine activity, and reduce the human co-partnership almost to zero. Others of a more rationalistic temperament take an opposite course. They exalt man's native powers of moral action and renewal to an extent that seems to preclude anything but a casual or incidental and supplementary divine activity. Our sympathies are with the former, not with the latter; but the Holy Spirit is so secret and so self-effacing in his work in the world, that we find it impossible to specify dogmatically or in detail the divine as distinguished from the human elements either in the process or in the final issue. We may be certain of one thing that the creative and ultimately determining factor is not our willing or doing but His.

Although we do not presume to define and delicately delineate the in-reaching and deep-going activities of God's Spirit in human nature, there are two things which we should ever bear in mind. One of these is that nothing good ever grows up in us without His having evoked and fostered it. He excites, sustains, and stimulates to higher and ever higher moral conviction, even though He acts in and through our conscience and will. He quickens religious life, and moves the race onward and upward in religious achievement;

albeit He works always in harmony with the laws of our being and the possibilities of our willing. What He crushes in us *should* be crushed ; what He supersedes in us *should* be superseded. The other thing to be remembered is that we cannot be too much alive to our personal responsibility, or apply ourselves too seriously to the work of salvation and sanctification, knowing that God works in us.

What we have said of the Holy Spirit in the world applies with added force to His freer and fuller work in the Church. He must ever break the Church's false strength that she may find the true. He must ever deepen her sense of need that she may have a growing sense of His sufficiency. Individual members of the Church as a whole may cry out against this method of perfecting, but the Holy Spirit loves too well the body in which He dwells and through which He must so largely act, to be sparing of His discipline. But while He afflicts with the one hand He upholds with the other, and the feeling of His faithful ones will always be that He doeth all things well. The cross must be the way of the Church's salvation and sanctification. This is the permanent condition of her spiritual health and efficiency.

Lastly, and with comparative brevity, we must treat of the individual's relation to the Holy

Spirit's saving and sanctifying work within his own heart.

The unholiness and unspirituality of man is that which necessitates this.

Oh wearisome condition of humanity,  
Born under one law, to another bound,  
Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity,  
Created sick ; commanded to be sound,  
Sure nature needs must take delight in blood  
Else had she found more easy paths to good.

It is not Nature but the God of Nature that has found the path to good. He has not seen fit to make it easy. Breaking forms a part of his way as well as making. Before the unspiritual and unholy creature we call man, can become spiritual and holy, a change must be wrought in the very quality of his being, a revolution (Plato and Kant being witnesses among philosophers) must take place in the constitution of his nature in its relation to God, duty, and immortality ; a new creation must be begun within the old with its weariness and vanity, its sickness and death, and its delight in blood ; a new man must be formed out of the ruins of a broken man, and the accomplishment of these mighty tasks was not possible without the shedding of the best blood that ever flowed in human veins. The tragedy of the soul had to be written in blood, the triumph of redemption had

to be effected on the hill of death. But through this shedding of holy blood came remission of sin and the release of the sin-bound soul. With this deliverance wrought by the Son, the Spirit of God is able to begin His work. What is our relation to His method of making us spiritual and holy? In the critical moments of the soul's life we see only two beings—God and me, God and me, God and me. No friend, however dear, no wife of our bosom, no priest, no prophet, no created being can intrude. The work to be done must be done either by "God or me."

Who but God can begin a new life in the soul such as we have seen to be necessary? Who but He can change the heart and ruling disposition? Who but He can kill the life of unholy hate and kindle in its place that of holy love? Does it not need the divine Spirit to lift us up out of the depths of our animality and moral degradation, and bring us into a new life of fruitful fellowship through the mediation of Christ and His cross?

Yet we, too, must share with Him in it all. It is our soul that is saved and sanctified, our filthy hearts that are cleansed by Christ's blood. Our thoughts that are raised and set upon divine things, our feelings that are ennobled. Consequently we have a part to play and a work to do. We are not mere passive recipients or unresponsive clay.

We must, under constraint of the Spirit and acting on our own responsibility, pass over from the world's side to God's, from self to Christ. This is the most momentous decision a man can make. This is the act that focusses all the rays of divine influence that have been streaming in upon us. This is the casting of the die which decides our eternal destiny and sums up our fundamental faith in, and appropriation of Christ. It involves the dedication of our powers to His service. As the supreme act of faith it brings a sense of justification before God and the entrance upon our heritage of righteousness in Christ.

In this process of breaking and making, breaking with the past by repentance and making the future through faith, our attitude must be that of active receptivity, a conscious and voluntary yielding to the Spirit. But it is the same attitude of "yielding" which determines our relation to the process of sanctification. We must cease to resist; our natural self-will must be broken, and a new strength, the strength to cling, must be begotten and brought into exercise. Then the process of sanctification will follow its normal course within the soul. If we are willing to be wholly God's—to let our own will go and accept His—to give up our own way and let Him have



His in everything without reserve—then the Spirit can accomplish His perfect work in us.

This is not so unnatural for the true Christian as it seems to many. A bird may prefer when young to use its legs and run upon its feet, but that does not imply that this is its true nature. When it is older and its wings are grown the flying instinct will assert itself, and it will renounce the hobbling life upon the ground. It may be so with Christians and the life of faith. In virtue of their spiritual birth they have been born with wings. With growth in holiness there will be the desire to live more on the wing. This may not be natural for the old life, but it is for the new.

To sum up and gather into a point much of what we have been saying, let us now ask why is there so much painful breaking as well as joyful making in the Christian life? We answer that the breaking and the making are both with a view to using. The end in this case will justify the means. Franz von Baader, the greatest and sanest of the mystics, says with wonderful insight, "The same infirmity which is able to preserve the species, only by changing the individuals, can preserve the individual only by the change of his substance." The iron or the marble, if we could conceive them becoming conscious, might grumble and grieve because

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of the processes through which they are passed before they can be used or made beautiful ; but if they could see the end, they might be reconciled. How much more are ye than marble or iron ! May each of you pray, " Lord break me, and make me, and use me."



VIII

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER AND OUR  
HELPS IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE



## VIII

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER AND OUR HELPS IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line,  
Severing rightly His from thine,  
Which is human, which Divine.

R. W. EMERSON.

IF the Holy Spirit is the great worker in all Christian service, how are we to keep in touch with Him and open to His gracious influences and auxiliary impulses? It must be by seeking and cherishing those conditions of heart and mind, which enable us to benefit from His presence, and profit by His co-operation. There are three degrees in which we may be said to possess the Spirit :—

- I. When we receive, or are baptized with His power.
- II. When He enters more fully into possession of our hearts and we are being filled more and more with His power.



III. When we are so filled with the Spirit that His gracious influence manifestly overflows from our hearts into others.

Under these three divisions we classify the helps to service, or the conditions of increasing power for the work of God among men.

I. For the first degree of spiritual power we need FAITH IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

II. For the second, FAITHFULNESS IN THE USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

III. For the third, THE DENIAL OF SELF AND THE SUBSTITUTION OF CHRIST FOR SELF upon the throne of the will.

These are the three helps corresponding to the three degrees in which the Spirit co-operates with us in service.

I. With regard to the first, repentance for sin is not enough to produce faith in the Holy Spirit. We must have faith in Christ. The baptism of repentance by John the Baptist was a symbolic act, betokening the abjuring of the old life and the desire for a better. It involved confession of sin as a preparation for cleansing from it, but the cleansing was comparatively cold and ineffective. It helped to cleanliness and honesty of life, but lacked depth and permanence. It did not radically change the nature and spiritualise the character. To bring out the superiority of

Christ's baptism He is said to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The element He uses changes the quality of the nature from carnal to spiritual, and gives a new kind of life. Hence it is spoken of as a new birth, or as being born of the Spirit or born from above, to indicate the entrance through it upon a new and higher plane of being. There is a vitalising of the energies of the heart such as we witness at the change from winter to spring. Have you seen the dead earth rising from its grave in the awakening season of the year? Have you watched the buds coming on the branches, or the flowers unfolding, and the great brown earth bursting into fruitfulness and beauty? What do all these changes tell of? They point not merely to the cleansing and purifying influences of the winter snow and rain; they prove that the sun has risen to his throne of power in the heavens, and that his heat-giving rays are reviving all things. So it is with the inner life of the soul in religion. When Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness, is exalted to His place in the heaven of the heart by faith, the Divine love which burns and blazes in Him brings new life to the spiritually dead and the regeneration of their powers.

Believing in Christ is always more or less accompanied with receiving His spirit. When there

is a personal relation of trust in Him as our Saviour and Redeemer, and a surrender to Him as our risen Lord and Master, He breathes upon our hearts, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." And the Spirit gives Himself to us, and His blessed influences fall like dew upon the grass. The soil of the soul is refreshed and its life renewed, so that where there was once desolation, there is now the beginning of growth.

There are certain evidences by which we can ascertain if this has taken place and we have received the Holy Spirit. We shall not allude to those which are peculiar to individuals; we prefer to dwell upon those that are common to all. The first is a *knowledge or discernment* of Divine things. Christ said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot SEE the kingdom of God." Spiritual birth gives vision of spiritual things. If we judge by the narratives in the Acts, the new sight comes all at once as if scales had fallen from the eyes. The baptism of the Spirit is equivalent to two facts:—the removal of a veil which hangs between the soul and the unseen world, and the imparting of power to see things formerly hidden from our eyes. We have a perception of spiritual realities to which we could before lay no claim. We had no previous experimental knowledge of their existence, and no experience of their power.

The second evidence of a Baptism of the Holy Spirit is *conviction* of the truth of what we see and of its transcendent importance for us. It is a splendid gift which the reception of the Spirit gives, enabling men to break through upon a world previously excluded from their experience. But that new knowledge would be of little value if along with it the Holy Spirit did not produce the conviction that the truths thus revealed ought to control the life. What we suffer from is, that we see the truth, but do not sufficiently recognise its necessity. The existence of God, His love in Christ, the reality of a future life and a final judgment,—all these are tremendous beliefs in themselves but we are never adequately impressed by them. They do not appeal to us with the native force which belongs to them. We appear to be spiritually incompetent to give them their due weight among the considerations that govern our lives. In most cases, of course, sin has positively incapacitated us for this. Spiritual things therefore, are too apt to have a dream-like aspect, even for earnest souls. To the great unheeding and unbelieving multitude they are little better than trifles. They are taken as lightly as the gossip of the day, or the fictitious sorrows of the heroine in the last novel.

Faith in the Holy Spirit is needed to work in

us the conviction that God and Christ and the soul are the great realities. If the new knowledge could be likened to an atmosphere of light coming into the darkened soul the new force of conviction accompanying it might be compared to an incoming tide of love to Christ which sweeps everything earthly before it. This was the experience of the apostles at Pentecost.

But the knowledge and conviction of the reality and importance of the unseen world are not the only evidences of the Holy Spirit's presence in any soul. There is a *holiness* of life, which betokens that His influence extends to every detail of conduct, and every sphere of interest. It is not enough that He should be striving with us; we must yield up our hearts to Him. The things into which we put ourselves must receive His impress. If this comes to pass universally, statesmen and ministers of religion, sailors and deacons, ploughmen and evangelists, miners and missionaries might be able to exchange places upon occasion. We should then have politicians of so high a character that they might lead their constituents in prayer as readily as men now in sacred offices and employments. We should have the common occupations of life filled by those who do their work as under the eye of a Divine on-looker. This would be a revolution in the spirit of men, so

that they would be lifted into direct dealing with God and be visibly animated by His Spirit. No more indisputable evidence of the descent of the Holy Spirit into human nature than this could be asked or imagined ; but it is a vision, alas ! of the far future, heralding the wondrous millennium that is to come.

Have you, my friends, any of these evidences of the baptism of the Spirit? Has He entered into your life? Have you been the subject of His operations? To these questions you should be careful to give an answer, for without such experiences you will neither be fit for service, nor have pleasure in it.

Be sure, moreover, that if you are to have the Spirit, you must receive Him. He is not in you either for salvation or service by nature, and you cannot of yourselves generate His power. You cannot work it up by your own efforts alone. You must rather bring it down from above. You cannot lift yourselves up ; you must be lifted up by the power of God coming down into you. For all these blessings you will find the necessary means in a living faith in the Holy Spirit. Do not remain powerless, like the Ephesian converts after their conversion. Such a condition is neither healthy nor happy. If you are Christians, and have not received the Spirit for service, then the



fault is not in God, but in yourselves. His resources are inexhaustible. He is waiting to bestow His Spirit. Ask yourselves then why you have not received Him. Have you used the means? Are you availing yourself of His offers? Are you living the life of faith through which alone you can enter into co-operation with Him in service?

II. For the second degree of spiritual power—that of being filled with the Spirit—faithfulness in the use of the means of grace is the great specific. We are all aware that the bare reception of the Spirit is not enough for continued success in service. The assistance we receive wastes away, as all living power does. It is George Herbert who asks: “Wouldst thou both eat thy cake and have it?” We cannot live and work by the grace which God gives us, without exhausting it. We require new grace for new needs. The dews of a past day die away, having given their strength to living things. We need new dew for new dryness of heart. The food of yesterday satisfied the hunger of yesterday, but what of the wants of to-day? We need new manna for our ever-recurring necessities. Our appetite requires to be appeased again and again. So it is with the bestowal of the Spirit’s power for service. We cannot thrive upon memory alone. We may have had the most gracious experiences in the past, but

they will not do for us now. We need new seasons of blessing, and new replenishment of the Spirit. The showers of the morning perish with the heat of noon. Our first faith may be shaken, our early love chilled, our immature hopes shattered. As we are thus emptied, we need to be filled from a fulness other than our own.

From whom is this supply to come? We cannot draw it from our own experiences. It does not flow from faith in the Holy Spirit alone. The Holy Spirit derives His fulness from the Father through Christ. Christ is the ever-flowing fountain. He is the river of Divine grace for all human need. His Spirit is like the Forth, which flows past our doors to the ocean. Its waters have slaked the thirst of a hundred generations, and fertilised the fields on either side century after century. Yet there are no signs of its failing. Or, to change the figure, we may compare Christ to the Sun of the soul. The rays of our sun have melted the snows of a thousand winters, and brought the renewal of spring and the glory of summer, and the golden abundance of many an autumn. But the sun shines on as brilliantly as ever. Its power is not lessened, nor its face dimmed. In like manner Christ has been as the sun to the souls of men, pouring forth upon them an unfailing fulness of spiritual energy, for teach-

ing, convincing, converting, and sanctifying, and every other good work. His faithful servants may have, through the Spirit, all the variety of gracious endowment which their varied condition and circumstances need; and they can have it at all times, by night or by day, in prosperity or in adversity, in seasons of quiet activity as well as during revivals.

Wherein does the fulness of Christ consist? With what are we to be filled from Him? What is the grace of Christ which the Holy Spirit communicates? In one word, it is love. The chief graces of Christ's character were His reverence for the Father's will, and His devotion to the work of saving men, together with all the qualities and dispositions which minister to these. We may sum them up in love. With this love we are to be filled.

This supplies an infinite ideal, which we can never hope to reach. For Christ's love to the Father was uninterrupted and unrestrained, while that to men—also ceaseless in its outflow—was more wonderful because so wholly undeserved. The loveless, the openly sinful, the outcasts of society, and those whom others would neglect as weak or worthless, were the objects of Christ's special love. This was the glory of His grace, that it was so free and unmerited. Can we be

filled with a love so large and generous, so full of tender and holy self-sacrifice? Does not the prospect of such a filling leave unlimited room in every heart for progress in the Divine life?

The other element of spiritual power which faithfulness in the use of the means of grace communicates in increasing measure, is experimental knowledge of the truth about God and man, as that is revealed in Jesus. Our Lord is scarcely less original and unparalleled in His success as a revealer of Divine truth, than He is as the embodiment of Divine love to men. His disclosures of spiritual truth about God and man and the relations between them were abundant in quantity, and of the highest quality. The sun-clear light which he casts upon the whence, the why, and the whither of human life has not been matched by all the efforts of all the thinkers in all the ages.

How is this fulness received? How do the love and truth of Christ fill our hearts and overflow into our life? "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John i. 16). It is progressively received. When men are born of the Spirit, they are not fully grown. They have a little grace to begin with, to prepare them for more grace afterwards. The grace of contrition makes room for repentance, and the grace of

repentance for hatred of sin, and so on, rising in regular succession, each degree of grace finding its explanation and vindication in that which succeeds it. Moreover, the grace already received expands the heart and gives increased capacity for receiving more. The flow of the Spirit's power deepens and broadens into a fuller stream of heavenly help. This happens in proportion as you widen the channel through which it comes to you. In this sense, you cannot live beyond your spiritual income. But you must keep attending to the source of supply. Dr. M'Donald of Ferintosh, a man of great experience in these matters, asked why it is that so many who make a hopeful profession at first, seem soon afterwards to fail in Christian service. He gave the answer to his own question: "It was," he said, "because they started business without capital." By this he meant that the accumulation of power had not been attended to, and that a fountain had not been opened in the heart, but only a poor little reservoir which was speedily exhausted. If we are spending, we must also be getting grace in exchange for grace.

Further, though progressive, this grace is not always the same. It adapts itself to the needs of the person receiving it. When your work seems to be fruitless, patience is requisite. When in-

creasing complexities drive you to God, the grace ministered will be heavenly guidance and wisdom. If disaster overwhelms your labours, you require resignation. Afterwards you may attain to the height of glorying in the Cross. If so, it will be because you have had further accessions of varying grace to meet your varying needs.

It is thus not always the same grace that is given to the same person at successive stages of service. The young and inexperienced worker requires one form of Divine help; the old and tried, another. At the beginning of the way, we think we have strength for anything; at the end, we have learned to rely more upon God's strength and less upon our own.

By what tests can we know whether we are thus receiving grace for grace, and accumulating the Spirit's power for service? How shall we know whether we are on the up-grade of the spiritual life? It will not always be safe to rely exclusively upon one kind of test, such as the fervency of our prayers, or the warm glow of our devotions. Sometimes it will be possible to register advance by our having a deeper sense of our own shortcomings and a humbler opinion of ourselves. A Divine discontent with the past is often a truer token of spiritual progress than the ecstasies which occasionally accompany the



ascent of the soul into higher regions of living and working.

Lastly, we have to recognise that though the origin of spiritual help remains in many ways mysterious, yet we know that the Holy Spirit ministers to our needs in accordance with natural laws and conditions. This is everywhere implied in the Bible, and it is what we presuppose when we speak of faithfulness in the use of the means of grace. We have been speaking throughout in this lecture of the Divine life within the soul of man, and we have now specially to remember that this life, like every other, requires favourable conditions for its growth and progress. In the natural world, our body is dependent upon light and heat, air and moisture ; in the spiritual world, we have illumination from the mind of Christ, warmth from the spirit of the Cross, air from the atmosphere with which the Holy Spirit enswathes the soul, and moisture from the tears of penitence. These come with sin and shortcoming, pain and suffering, sorrow and disappointment. Have we been living under any or all of these conditions of spiritual progress ?

Even if we have, we require something more. Every growing life is a feeding life. So is it with the life of the Spirit within the heart of man. We need to be living upon the bread of life if we

are to continue advancing in the volume and force of our activities. The Bible is a great storehouse of provision for the soul. Are we using it? Are we living by it, and feeding on it? A written revelation has many offices to fulfil, but none more vital than this of promoting spiritual growth.

But even if we are using this harvested food of heaven, and are growing in strength by using it, this is not enough. We must have fellowship. Our spiritual life began in union with Christ, and it can only grow in power by increasing communion with Him, and fuller union with His followers. This is effected best through the worship and work of the Church. The contact of mind with mind and heart with heart, and the communion of all with God through the Spirit, are powerful means for increasing the Divine life. Our faith is strengthened by the faith of others, our love is quickened by their love, and thereby we are able to do more work for Christ among men. There are many things which can be accomplished by union with others which are far beyond the power of individual effort. We have to bear in mind that it is our duty not only to work with God, but with men. We ought to seek their co-operation. It is essential for many enterprises, and it multiplies our power for service.

Unity is strength, and even when we cannot meet to get good, we can meet to do good. Our forefathers recognised that there was nothing better worth fighting for than this right of meeting together for Christian fellowship and the worship of God according to conscience. If, therefore, you are not faithfully following with Christ's flock, you are to that extent at least neglecting powers and opportunities. These are nowhere available except in fellowship. They can never be made up for by personal zeal in solitary work. In the primitive Church, as described in Scripture, we find no churchless Christians. No doubt there were special influences drawing them together into close union with one another. The persecution of heathen enemies and the infirmity of new converts made the early Christians seek fellowship with one another more frequently than we now do. But there is still no more potent stimulus to service, and no more refreshing inspiration in it, than fervent social worship. When this communion culminates in partaking together of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, our sluggishness in His work appears criminal. Our vision of Him crucified for us must bring acute self-reproach, and an overwhelming sense of individual unworthiness.

Prayer is another vital condition of spiritual

power. It is as necessary as preaching and sacramental fellowship, and is sometimes more immediately potent in its influence. It has a direct and intentional relation to service, which cannot always be said of the other two. Prayer is the most essential exercise and predominant characteristic of religion. It is the cry of the human soul to God for blessing and help. It is a torrent of desire rushing forth to the almighty Sustainer of worlds and Saviour of men. It is the most direct channel of communication between our souls and the Creator. There never was a religion without prayer; there never could be, for it is one of the natural instincts of humanity. Wherever you find men, you find them praying.

What we find in all religions, we have in perfection in our own. In God we have one whom we know to be willing and ready to help us. If we despaired of this, we could not pray to Him. But although it is thus intimately concerned with the character and disposition of God, it has also much to do with ourselves. Feeling our need drives us to prayer, and when this need is vividly realised, it makes our petitions definite and importunate. An abiding sense of spiritual want makes us persistent, pointed, and persevering in appeal.

It is in this connection that we need the

co-operation of the Holy Spirit. Deep down in the hidden depths of the heart, away from all others, and even half unknown to ourselves, He is convincing us of sin and showing us our need of grace. Here, where we are powerless, we have His help. He is interceding for us and linking our desires with Omnipotence. In every part of Christian service, prayer—simple, short, ejaculatory—may have a place, and no one of us can set limits to its efficacy.

We have to notice one more point of practical importance. The use of these means of growth is left largely in our own hands. The means are ours to use or refuse. We may, if we please, deprive ourselves of any, or all of them, or we may abuse them. Sometimes, through a variety of influences, we neglect them ; or, through lack of preparation, we do not get the good out of them that we might : at other times, and in other circumstances, we prefer one to the prejudice of the rest. But in every case, we may be sure that any want of faithfulness in their use will be followed by a diminution of Divine help in spiritual service.

But we have also to remember, progress in power for service is dependent not only upon the right use of the means of grace, but also upon the due performance of all the duties of the Christian life. Food does not make the body grow vigorous

without exercise. By exercise we assimilate the nourishment which otherwise would be a burden and a hindrance. So it is in the religious life. We must exercise the grace and truth we already possess, before we can increase it. By engaging in work for Christ, we are able to benefit from the opportunities provided. If, on the other hand, we do not put our religion into practice, and do not exert ourselves in Christian activities, the blessings we have received wither and finally die. The nemesis of disuse is decay of faculty, or the death of inspiration.

It is astonishing how little our outward circumstances really minister to increased efficiency in service. The very things that we conjecture would make us faithful and successful in Christian work are frequently those which have an opposite effect. Worldly prosperity, abundant comfort, ample leisure, would all naturally be regarded as favourable conditions for enlisting our energies in self-denying activities, yet the very reverse is usually the result. They who do much are always ready to do more; they who do little are inclined to do less. There is, moreover, something in an easy life and privileged social position which is distinctly adverse to employing our powers in genuinely unselfish work. In the average man, selfishness is strengthened by



success and fed and fattened by good fortune. Hence it is that helps in service such as we have been describing, are to a large extent inward and spiritual rather than outward and material. It would appear that this must be so, until there has been a radical revolution in human nature.

III. Finally, in order that we may be so filled with power that it shall flow from our own hearts into others, we must not only possess the Spirit, but be wholly possessed by Him. Hitherto we have been speaking of the means by which we might have more and more of the Holy Spirit ; now we are to consider how He may have more and more of us.

What we mean by this may be made plain by a simple illustration. Let us take it for granted that you have received Christ into your heart and given Him the chief place in it. You have found His presence a growing delight, and His influence has sanctified your character and strengthened your service. His counsel has been the light of your eyes and the opener up of your way. His love has cheered and brightened you. One day you discover that the relation between you and Christ has changed. You no longer treat Him chiefly as a dear and helpful friend ; you recognise your Master. His greatness and goodness, His tenderness and sympathy, have completely

conquered you. You no longer ask Him for occasional assistance ; you allow Him henceforth to take the control of your life, and humbly bid Him welcome to all that you have and are.

This is in figure a description of the course of thought in this lecture. We have been inquiring how we might have more and more of Divine help in Christian service. The Holy Spirit has been the helper upon whom we have leaned. Now a change has come. We began by seeing in Him our great Helper, we end by making Him the one Master whom we serve. We did seek to have Him at our side as a fellow-worker to whom we could look for help in time of need. But we now oftener kneel before Him and do Him homage as our rightful Lord. He has come in and taken full possession of us. We have placed Him in the judgment seat of conscience and upon the throne of our will. We have given ourselves wholly up to Him—hand and foot, body and soul—that He may do with us what He will. We invite Him to define our duty for us, and we determine that the future shall shape itself according to His mind and purpose rather than our own. When we thus put Christ in the place of self, we, as Christian workers, come within the conditions which are necessary to the full enjoyment of spiritual power.

Have you entered upon a service which is thus exclusive in its object and complete in its self-dedication? Have you made an unreserved surrender of yourselves to the Holy Spirit, and have you parted for ever from the weakness and ineffectiveness of a divided heart and an uncertain will? Have you accepted Him as an unseen Master, and resolved to give Him a whole-hearted and single-minded service in the field which He marks out for you? Are you giving every particle of strength, every atom of manhood or womanhood, every day of your life to the risen Christ, in free and full surrender, to be spent in the realisation of His purpose in the world? This is a self-devotion which is heroic; this is a consecration which is impassioned and full; and, with the help of God, it triumphs over obstacles often deemed insuperable. It achieves victories that would otherwise be impossible. It is Christian service at its best.

But what a price, you will say, must be paid for such power! Nothing less than the dethronement of the self-life in all its forms, and the crucifixion of the natural heart. No doubt the spirit of the Cross pervades the whole of every life of earnestness. It is God's proof and test of strength laid upon all genuine Christians. But this partnership is something more. As the condition of

the highest power for service, it is something different. It is not to be confounded with single acts of self-denial and sacrifice. It is a filling-up of that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. It is in this sense that the death of self is the life of service.

Nevertheless, on the ruins of this carnal self a spiritual life arises. When the spirit of self has been banished from its most secret hiding-places, the Holy Spirit can come into full possession, and bring with Him a new nature, which transforms the will, and is the source of a more strenuous inner life. This is Paul's doctrine of mystical union with the Risen Christ, a union so complete that it may be spoken of as identification, or the substitution of Christ for self.

The gain of this change is great. We are so joined with Christ that we act as if He and we were a single person and not two. Though this process of identification is never complete, it should be progressive. It is the ideal towards which you should be looking, and since Pentecost there is no reason why you should not be coming ever nearer and nearer to it. For in proportion as the Holy Spirit is in us, Christ will be in us. He lives within us, and if we live His life, we get force to do much that He did. The power is in us, but not of us. As we have seen, it is just because

it is not of us that it can be in us. By ceasing to be our own, we make Christ ours. His mighty strength and our weakness coalesce, and thus we reach the highest degree of power for service.

This high order of power is, it would appear, transmissible in modified forms to others. Christ says in St. John vii. 38, "He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Then the explanatory note is added: "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." By this Jesus implies that the power of vital religion flows out of him who truly possesses it into others. Moreover, these beneficent influences may be so abundant and so vivifying that they can be described as "rivers of living water." Believers are channels of spiritual blessing to others, but they are not blind, impassive media for conveying the power of the Spirit. The Spirit must first show forth His light and love in them, before they can attract and illumine others. Their faces must be bright with the radiance of His presence, their hearts tender with His love, their life sweet and unselfish with His grace, before they can have the fulness of power which leads others to penitence and devotion. When He works through them thus freely, then they are clothed with His might.

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It is good for us as Christian workers to remember that the Holy Spirit abides in the Church in order to renew and hallow men, through the agency of those who have themselves believed. It links us together with our fellow-men in a high and holy relationship. We can be, through Christ living in us, the instruments of their sanctification and blessing. If there are some who can know the fulness of grace only as they receive it through us, what an inducement is this to be filled with the Spirit !





IX

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PURPOSE, AND  
SOME OF OUR HINDRANCES IN  
CHRISTIAN SERVICE



## IX

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S PURPOSE, AND SOME OF OUR HINDRANCES IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Is the cloud of hindrance broke  
But by the failing of the fleshly yoke? . . .

ROBERT BROWNING.

IN this lecture we have to seek out and discuss those things in us which produce inefficiency or inactivity in Christian service. We shall not stop to illustrate the evil effects which open and coarse vice have upon service. You are perfectly well aware that sins of that kind destroy all fitness for it. They rob you of your good name, menace the spiritual life by violence, and lay waste the powers of the soul. But apart from them there are many other influences and dispositions which bring barrenness inevitably in their train. There are deadening infidelities of thought and life, and disabling habits which must be avoided at all costs, otherwise they will effectually prevent you

from reaching that measure of power for service which God in His providence has put within your reach. We cannot exhaust the list of these hindrances, but we may mention a few which are met with more frequently in the ordinary line of Christian duty.

These we shall group, as in the previous lecture, under three conditions of heart and mind which are unfavourable to the presence and co-operation of the Holy Spirit with us in Christian service. There is, *first*, the unbelief which prevents us from receiving the aid we might from the baptism of the Spirit. There is, *secondly*, the unfaithfulness in heart and life which frustrates the increase of the Spirit's power within us. *Thirdly*, and lastly, there is that unreality in service which makes it impossible to transmit to others, in any form, the blessing we ourselves have received. These are three degrees of spiritual insensibility and deadness, corresponding roughly to what the Scriptures speak of as (1) resisting, (2) grieving, and (3) quenching the Spirit, and under them we classify the hindrances to service which the time at our disposal may permit us to deal with.

We have seen that the hindrances to our enjoyment of the Spirit's power cannot be from any straitness in God, or any unwillingness on His part to bestow it. They must therefore be

found either in us or in the channels of communication between God and us, and between us and our fellow-men. Hence our treatment of hindrances under the three negative forms, unbelief, unfaithfulness, and unreality. These have to do with the state of the heart, and they are all obstructive to the continuance and progress of the grace of God within us. If we could think of spiritual power for service under the Biblical figure of a river or stream, then the hindrances may be compared to the obstacles which prevent it freely flowing from God into us, and through us to others. The popular philosophy of our day, as it has found expression in Mr. Spencer, emphasises the importance of making and keeping open the means of communication between the various parts of human society, if these are to remain healthy and vigorous. In like manner a wise theology and a living Christian ethic should strive to increase and perfect the means of communication between God and men, so that the Divine life shall more and more fully flow into and through us, reviving and refreshing us, delivering us from the miserable burdens of our own lethargy and littleness, and bathing us in its beneficent waters.

If the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit are so essential to the Christian Church in order that it may remain a living representative



of God upon earth, how much more when it seeks to go forth conquering the world for Him? Soldiers in camp and ships on the home stations can be provisioned with comparative ease, but when the army is in the field or the fleet on duty in distant seas, the difficulties are indefinitely increased. There is always danger that the line of communication may be broken and the fighting force cut off from its base. Against these special risks, special precautions must be taken, and in our day no small part of the thought and care needed to equip an expeditionary force turns upon the adequacy or inadequacy of the commissariat. There might be ample supplies of coal for the ships' bunkers in the mines of Wales, but if any imperfection in the means of transit or any unforeseen occurrence prevented its distribution, then the squadron would be as badly off for fuel as if the sources of supply had been exhausted. The department of intelligence is no less vitally connected with the effectiveness of our army and navy in action, and in proportion as civilisation increases, the arrangements for gathering and distributing intelligence will be brought nearer and nearer to perfection.

In the last lecture we saw that the life and energy of God come into us for service through faith in the Holy Spirit, faithfulness in the use of

the means of grace, and a substitution of Christ for self upon the throne of our wills. These are three of the greatest channels of communication between God and man. Unbelief, unfaithfulness, and unreality are their exact opposites. They choke up the channels of blessing, or dry up the waters of life which flow through them. Therefore they figure here as the typical forms of hindrance in Christian service, and we deal with them in their order the one after the other.

I. *Unbelief* comes first. In our day we have marked tendencies to materialism in life and formalism in religion. There is a crude philosophy which overlooks the invisible world or shuts out the activity of God from the visible. As a consequence, we are face to face with a rampant spirit of practical indifference to the higher wants and religious interests of human nature. Only that which can be seen or touched is regarded as real and important; all else is reduced to the level of an unreality or an uncertainty. The churches might be expected to break through or melt these icy obstacles to a fuller and truer life, but some of them are in danger of being honey-combed with the same spirit, and in others there is evident a decided drift towards a decorous formality in worship and superficiality in work. Only a new descent of the Holy Spirit into human

nature can deliver us from these hindrances to service.

But are we not preventing the possibility of this by closing up the channels of communication between God and us through unbelief. We do not mean that any of you are theoretical materialists, or that your beliefs have been shattered by the attacks of scepticism. We know that you do not live in such an atmosphere of learned leisure as would expose you to danger from that quarter. Religion with you is a part of the life, rather than a plaything of the mind, a perception of the heart, not a conception of the head. Therefore the clamour of the schools rarely reaches you, and if it does, it is only as a spent echo. Nevertheless, the root out of which these evils grow, is in you as in all, and if it does not bear the same fruit, it will produce something akin to it. Therefore you are liable to be depressed by doubt, or deterred from activity by despondency. The spiritual, the super-sensuous—especially when it is allied with demands for moral advance—encounters grave disabilities in a nature such as ours. Religion is an instinctive activity of the human soul, but not such religion as Christ exemplified. It is always against the grain, and even a heart partially renewed resents the constant application of the whip to the moral sense and the spur to the sense of duty.

You may ask, What are the evidences of the presence of this degree of unbelief in the heart? One of the most readily observable signs of it is *the tendency to exaggerate difficulties* in Christian work. This paralyses effort for the good of others. The spirit of unbelief kills the spirit of enterprise in spheres where the spring of activity is faith. The obstacles in the way are exaggerated to such an extent that we frighten ourselves from doing anything. We get nervous about putting our hands to any good work. We scan all the conditions with a critical eye, and are inclined to fight off the pressing duty to which we are called, in the hope that more favourable circumstances will arise. We ask so many anxious questions of ourselves, that we have scarcely courage or strength left for actual service. We quarrel with our lot and the age in which we live. We speak about the prevalent indifference to religion and the hardness of men's hearts, which prevent them being moved by motives and swayed by appeals that were potent with their forefathers. We think the spiritual temperature and the division and rivalry among churches so troublesome, and the forces of intemperance and impurity so bold and defiant, that our hearts sink within us, and we shirk the task that lies nearest us. At such seasons we are ready to wait before we work, and

are prone to be sceptical as to the fruitfulness of religious activity, even on old and well-recognised lines.

While we should be the last to deprecate criticism of the causes to which we give ourselves, yet in our day this habit has run to excess. No doubt he who is straining all his energies in some noble endeavour should, as a matter of duty, carefully consider both the value of the object for which he is working, and the probabilities of his attaining it. Yet if this spirit be carried too far in Christian work, we never accomplish anything. Ask yourselves whether you would care to have all the signs propitious and all the conditions favourable. Would the work then be worth doing ?

If it never tried you, if it never demanded any sacrifice of you, if you never had to grapple with unpromising material, how could God ever educate you spiritually through service. Struggle is a *sine qua non* for the development of strength of every kind. The tropics, with their relaxing climate and their exuberant productiveness, are not the best breeding-ground for heroes. They have never been the home of a strenuous civilisation. The countries within the temperate zone have been nurseries of the strong, just because the conditions of life in them are more exacting.

Moreover, recall the circumstances under which previous workers for Christ have achieved their greatest victories. Were their difficulties not immensely greater than yours? Ten thousand things were against them. If they had calculated their chances of success in the same unbelieving spirit, would they have ever gone on to do what they did? Were there not enough discouragements in their surroundings to make them slacken their activities? We complain about the coldness or the ingratitude, the perversity or the hardness of our fellow-men—did *they* not also see things in human nature bad enough to sicken them with their task and destroy the very desire to save such men? Whenever we speak to others about their soul's salvation we expose ourselves to disappointment and rebuff. Whenever we try to do any good we run the risk of meeting with ingratitude, if not callous indifference. But should this keep us back for a moment from such Christ-like work? Better to go on in the path of self-sacrificing effort for the welfare of others and leave the issues with God than to retire in a spirit of cowardly unbelief into ourselves.

My friends, we shall never get all the conditions of Christian service favourable. There must be difficulties to try our faith and strengthen our character. There will always be enough to



bring us back to the necessity for unquestioning trust in God and the promises of the Gospel. You will be driven to lean upon a power other than your own, and to draw upon fountains of inspiration deeper than the impulses of your own heart. The difficulties in Christian work exist to be overcome, and if you do not brace yourselves for the arduous task, you will never arrive at the fulness of blessing which God meant you to receive through faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit. But we need not fear. God will take care that none of us shall be allowed to walk by sight in this world. Nay, we shall be more and more called to convert into helps the difficulties which now hinder us. We are not only to overcome them, we must overcome them in the right spirit, so that they shall be stepping-stones to higher endeavour. Each victory will then add momentum to the movement of our character towards its goal. The experience thus acquired will give the key to future conquests in more arduous battlefields.

The second and the only other evidence of unbelief which we shall mention is that of the Christian worker *who ignores God's co-operation with him in his work*. This is a worse evil than the exaggeration of its difficulties, for as we saw, the very essence of all Christian service is a

voluntary activity which God can use for the ends of His kingdom. Unless He be in it, work is not service, and certainly not Christian. To leave out God's co-operation in what we do among men for Christ's sake, is to be guilty of a gross form of unbelief which will finally blight our character and sterilise our efforts.

Two Highlanders discussing the world-old problem of the union of God's agency with man's, arrived at opposite conclusions. The one advocated, the other denied the immanent activity of God in human action. "You fool!" said Donald to Angus; "*you* save yourself without the assistance of the Almighty! Poor creature, you can neither think a thought nor work a 'wrought' without the Divine aid." In our view Donald was nearer the truth than his companion, for we cannot prosper in any undertaking without God. He must be with us in it. He must be the life of our life, the light of our seeing, and the strength of our hand, before we can attain to success even in worldly occupations. To Him we owe the preservation and continuance of our faculties and powers as well as the wisdom that directs their use.

If this be true of our secular callings, how much more is it applicable to our special work for God. To overlook or ignore His co-operation in this sphere is an aggravated act of unbelief, and

when it is repeated and becomes habitual, it disqualifies for further usefulness. Yet it is one of the commonplaces of religious literature, that the fortunes of the kingdom of God among men, and the progress of truth in its conflict with error, are estimated as if the activity of God Himself could be left out in the reckoning. Worldly-minded ecclesiastics in particular are prone to trust in their own wisdom, or planning, or organisation, or even in the number, distinction, and pecuniary resources of those who follow them. This is a fatal mistake, and one which Christian workers in the humblest corner of the vineyard can never afford to imitate. You must always look for and lean upon the Divine co-operation with you in your work. You are directly and wholly dependent upon His assistance, and you should always act as if you were conscious of this. In prayer, in preaching, as well as in practical effort, you should ask Divine help on every occasion. You should begin, continue, and end with God, and only then will your activities have the desired effect upon men. Constant breathing of the atmosphere of prayer and communion is the vital condition of spiritual service. The Divine element is the oxygen in these in-breathings, which fits them for purifying and vivifying the blood of the soul, which is love,

The ignoring of this Divine co-operation in religious work is utterly inexcusable in religious men. There are many reasons for saying so. Some of these are so evident and emphatic that we cannot avoid mentioning them. Mr. Ruskin has taught us that Immanuel Kant's doctrine of art for art's sake is the blindest of blind ideals. He contends that art should minister to the moral and spiritual and material well-being of men. He regards the co-operation of God as indispensable. God's Spirit must be in it, though it is not necessary that He be always recognised. The co-operation goes on through natural means, whether the worker is conscious of it or not. But it is not so in Christian activity. In it we are not only dependent upon God, but we must recognise and express this dependence, and always presuppose it. This is one of the conditions of His co-operation with us. Without it we cannot use the power which He has committed to us. He gives the Spirit to them that ask Him, and in the measure of their faith and importunity in asking. Where there is dependence upon self and a feeling that we are equal to all that is expected of us, then we are perforce left by God to our own resources. This is the meaning of the paradox that when we are strong then are we weak; and when we are weak then are we strong, because trusting in that

strength of God which flows into us in response to deeply-felt need. But when we have done our best, and when we have not spared ourselves, we have still to avoid looking upon that as the sole condition of success. Our best will be no more effectual than our worst, apart from God. Moreover, there is the less reason for Christian workers to forget their constant dependence upon the co-operation of God, because there are so many things in their experience to remind them of it. At every turn they are confronted with these in proportion as they are sincere and earnest.

II. There is secondly, among hindrances in Christian service, that unfaithfulness in heart and life which frustrates the increase of the Spirit's power within us. Our faith in God may have become the medium of helpful spiritual influence, but there is something in us, or in our relations to Him, which causes this power to pass off unused. We do not convert the Divine energy given us by faith in the Holy Spirit into work for Christ, and there must be reasons for this. Let us take an illustration from science in its everyday applications. In one of the American cities we saw a newly made electric tram-car standing motionless. It was perfectly equipped for work, but the electric current had not yet been received through the conducting wire overhead. The connection still

required to be made, and so long as this was not effected, the needed power for movement was wanting. But supposing this energy were lost as soon as received, or before it became operative, there would still be no motion. This waste would be analogous to what takes place in religious life, through unfaithfulness in the use of power already received. If we change the illustration and imagine that it is the human body which has to be charged with electricity, it must be insulated from the ground as well as connected with an electric machine. Without some non-conducting material between the body and the earth the current escapes and is lost. This may serve as an image of what passes between the soul of the worker and the world. In virtue of his faith, he becomes the recipient of Divine power sufficient to fit him for service. But these communications are made fitful, or feeble, or nugatory, by the worldliness which interferes with them. This is one of the effects of unfaithfulness as a hindrance in Christian service.

We must, however, be aware that we have not only to be used by the Spirit in service. His use of us should be a growing reality in our experience. But this is what unfaithfulness invariably prevents. Sometimes we see a stream that is sluggish in its flow, passing through a deep gorge



cut out in rocks so hard that it is impossible to suppose that the work of preparing a channel could ever have been done by itself. It is too torpid, too feeble, too lazy to have scooped out its present bed. It has availed itself of previous clefts in the rock, and depressions in the soil due to the action of other forces than its own. Now the momentum of its waters is so weak that it permits of mud accumulating, and rushes springing up in its course. These obstructions still further retard its progress, until by and by it will lose itself altogether in them. Something like this may describe the condition and experiences of those in whose souls the river of the Divine life has begun to flow. It originated in the springs of love in Christ, and has pursued its way through channels made suitable for it by events and crises in our personal history ; but sinful habits and unspiritual dispositions have checked its natural rate of progress, until that has come to be so slow as scarcely to be perceptible.

What are some of the obstacles which may be grouped under the head of unfaithfulness? They will be found in manifestations of that worldly spirit which is so opposed to the Spirit of God. This worldly spirit may show itself in anything. We have no time to trace its working in all the spheres of business or pleasure, religion or social

life. It may be more helpful if we show it in a single department of our life. We can then lay down and illustrate some of the principles which should regulate your conduct in relation to worldly things generally.

Consideration of the Christian worker in his recreations is a subject which affords ample opportunity for dealing in germ and principle with all the temptations which become hindrances to him in Christian service. How far are they permissible to the Christian worker earnestly praying to be endowed with the fulness of the Spirit? We take it for granted that he wishes to live his life not for self, but for God, and that he is keeping in mind that he is a member of a great society, which has laws given to it by Christ. These he has fully resolved to obey. This society is commissioned to conquer the world for God, and he, as a loyal member, seeks to take his share in this vast enterprise. We also would not wish to be, or to be considered sour, or harsh, or crabbed in the attitude we take up to the world of amusement. We do not wish to repel your sympathies, but rather to win them. To do this, we cannot be too tender or too loving. Nevertheless, we earnestly desire that you should consecrate the whole of your life to God, and with a view to this, it would be a mistake to be unreasonably severe, especially if we

mean what we say to be authoritative for you, as the expression of the mind of the Master.

Perhaps no question of Christian practice is more frequently debated in our day in religious circles than this of the Christian's relation to recreations. One can never say when it may not come up for discussion—sometimes with no little acrimony. There are, of course, always differences of opinion, and many different answers are given by different people. As a consequence there is very much confusion, and in some minds a feeling of despair, as if the matter could never be finally settled on a secure basis of principle and conviction.

Some consider recreation or amusement as never anything but a hindrance in the Christian life. They regard it as necessarily an evil in itself. Leighton, who was a good and holy man, said that pleasures are like mushrooms: it is difficult to distinguish those that are wholesome from those that are poisonous. Some will think with him, that in these circumstances it is better to avoid them.

That may be a noble theory of life, and one that has much in it to stir the blood and strengthen the will, and yet if it were prescribed as an obligatory rule of life upon all Christians, it would be fraught with consequences of an unlooked-for

kind. If we can distinguish between those that are good and those that are evil, as Leighton admits, then it may be our duty to do so, even though that involves considerable difficulty, and some risk of serious error. Besides, we cannot but believe that to label all recreations as evil would be contrary to the mind and will of God, as these have been revealed to us in the teaching of Scripture and experience, as well as in the example of our Saviour.

We may begin by saying that there are undoubtedly amusements which are sinful, and which must be given up. They are contrary to the express command of God. They minister either to the lust of the flesh or the pride of life. They are utterly unsatisfying as recreations. The pleasure they give is brief, feverish, and unwholesome. If we indulge in it, our enjoyment is vitiated by secret uneasiness of conscience, and acrid feelings of internal misery, not to speak of the more bitter and violent pangs of remorse which may follow. It is scarcely necessary to remind you here that even these do not exhaust all the terrible consequences in the unending future which such sins bring forth. It may be enough to say that they undermine the character, even when they do not finally impair the health of the body, or ruin that of the soul.

On the other hand, it is equally clear, especially in an age like ours, that recreation forms a necessary part of life, whenever it can be honestly had. It may be said to be obligatory. We need it, as we need sleep after labour, or rest after fatigue. Some recreation we must have, if we can get it consistently with duty. Unvaried and unbroken toil is a burden that we cannot bear, and that we ought not to attempt to bear if it were within our power. It breaks down our natural strength prematurely, depresses our vitality, and beats the heart out of us. Moreover, we have to remind you that the spiritual nature is influenced for good or evil by the state of the body. There may be exceptional men, capable of exceptional endurance, without injury to their higher life, but an ordinary Christian is usually at his best for work when the body is sound and strong, rather than enfeebled or ailing. Even if you can regard the body merely as an instrument for work, and treat it accordingly, you must still make it a matter of conscience to keep it fit for use as far as it is in your power so to do. A celebrated preacher used to say familiarly, that no small part of his ability to influence men in the pulpit, was dependent upon the bodily vigour with which God had endowed him. Furthermore, our religion was never designed to make our

pleasures less. It is one of the triumphs of Christianity that it unites joy with service, and seeks to lead us to what is best and brightest in life and beyond it. God has made us so that we may delight in the society of our fellow-men. He has given us a beautiful world, and called us to rejoice and be glad in it. The earth is not a bare wilderness, with rocks and sand, without flowers and the song of birds. It is full of marvellous loveliness and inexhaustible delight. No poet ever embodied in his glowing inspirations the soul of beauty that dwells in the morning cloud or the dying sunset, in the wild flower or the granitic mountain peak, in the wail of the winter wind or the shimmer of the summer moonlight on the sea.

It therefore seems possible to have recreation that is as certainly innocent and elevating as the bad is sinful and degrading. Nowadays change of scene is a favourite means of recruiting our exhausted energies. One cannot well take holidays in the surroundings which are associated with the daily toil of life. Change of place is no less necessary for those who work with the brain. It does them more immediate good. Probably no small part of the lengthened term of life which the average man enjoys in our day is to be set down to the growing practice of holidaying at least once a year.



Some strong and energetic natures appear to need no other change than change of occupation. That is certainly better than none at all, for it brings into play different faculties, and in so doing gives the others a rest. If the available stock of nervous energy at their disposal is sufficient to bear this continuous drain upon it, then theirs is certainly the most commendable way of taking recreation. But, alas! how few of us are able to live up to this high standard. We need change of scene and occupation to be provided for us by out-door recreations or a country walk. For those who are confined to offices, or who work indoors in vitiated atmospheres, one or other of these may be a matter of physical necessity. If such recreations are indulged in in a rational and moderate way, and with a due regard to the company we keep, and the spirit in which we engage in them, there may be nothing in them that will take the bloom off the inner life of the most saintly soul that ever wore the garment of a fleshly nature.

Most people would be in agreement so far in regard to the recreations described as respectively good and bad. But we cannot forget that while there is a way of taking recreation which may be obligatory, we have also to remember how liable it is to abuse. If we give too large a proportion

of our time or strength to any pastime, there is a danger of it weakening God's hold upon us, or our hold upon Him. If this be so with any of you, you should exercise a watchful care over yourselves, and if you do not abstain from recreation, you should certainly restrain your tendencies to excess in these directions. There is no doubt that too much indulgence in amusement of any kind weakens the fibre of the character, and tends to make men useless for the highest purposes of existence. We have only one life to live, and we have much to do in it ; therefore let us make the most of ourselves and our opportunities for the greater glory of God and the eternal good of men.

But after we have disposed of recreations that may be described without difficulty as either innocent or harmful, we come upon a much larger group, which are of a questionable character. Walking in the open air, travel, visits to the hills or to the seaside, music, painting, wholesome literature, science, and even any little hobby that fills up the odd corners of life, all these and others like them few would prohibit. There are, however, cards and dancing, and theatre-going, and billiards and novel-reading, in which the multitude indulge—you will ask, What are we to say of them? A great many young people, brought up in strictly

Christian homes, resent the ban which has been imposed upon these forms of amusement. They declare that it is a relic of the Puritanical spirit which had a work to do in cleansing society from the dissipations, frivolities, and licence of the era of the Restoration. But they protest that the restrictions with reference to these pastimes are now unnecessary, and that abstinence from them forms no part of a genuinely Christian code of conduct. Hence when they grow up, and start in life upon their own account, they break loose from these traditions, and are in danger of having all that is best in their Christian training swamped by giving way to long-pent-up desires for indulgence.

There is just enough of truth in this protest to make it a pernicious and dangerous fallacy. No doubt Christianity is not a system of negations. It is a great inspiration, a new spiritual life, a categorical imperative, requiring us to be and to do something, rather than an embargo upon the activities of our leisure moments. But this, too, is a one-sided contention, for Christianity covers the whole life. No part of the life can be lived away from Christ. We belong to Him in our seasons of recreation as much as in our hours of business. We cannot cut up our life into two portions, in one of which we give way to un-

restrained indulgence of natural inclination, and another in which we are held fast in the bonds of Christian law and disciplinary enactment. Moreover, our religion is a positive and practical and authoritative rule of life, as well as a gift of heaven to the heart and conscience.

Those who go farther and speak of habitual theatre-going as a means of moral improvement and an agency for the regeneration of society, are profoundly in error. Everything about the stage is essentially unreal as a representation of life. The scenery, costumes of the actors, and the actors themselves are not what they appear to be ; and even if the play teaches a moral lesson, the truth cannot be conveyed to the mind of the spectator through a medium which is in itself so utterly unreal. After the curtain is down, and the drama ended, the voluptuary or the rake will never allow the true sentiment to survive as a power in his heart, when the accessories which made it impressive vanish from view like a dream of the night. You may rest assured, therefore, that if any of you resort to this means of gaining inspiration and guidance in Christian service you are predestined to disappointment.

But it is idle discussing the details and distinctions of amusements, and how far recreation is allowable in an institute for Christian workers,

the members of which are, from the nature of the case, ardently and enthusiastically Christian. Most of you are indifferent to the subject because you live on a higher plane of being, and have other interests absorbing your thought and sympathy. After all, recreation—when it degenerates into amusements that need defending and defining in these subtle ways—is not worthy of so much serious attention from serious people. It does not belong to the substance of life. It is not primary, but secondary, and should be dealt with accordingly in the organisation of our activities. The dance, the game, the play belong to the child-stage of life; and when they are carried into more mature years they sink into an altogether subordinate position and value. For this reason, as well as others, it is not good, not healthy, and certainly not promising, to meet with a Christian worker who makes too much of his liberty to indulge in things that may be lawful but are not expedient. He is never likely to reach the highest efficiency in service, nor the noblest recompense of reward.

It is necessary to call your attention to these severe aspects of this subject, for we live in an age and in a society that is set upon pleasure as if it were the chief good of man. We must be amused, and if we are not, we decline to be interested, whether it be a religious homily or a scientific

lecture. It is well that among other blessings which flow from a fully consecrated life, this also should be conspicuous, that it be a deliberate protest against this false and shallow idea of the main object of existence.

In all such inquiries as the present we have to turn our minds not merely to outward circumstances, but also to inward conditions. We must ask in each case in which the kind of amusement is disputable the two following questions: first, Can we carry Christ with us into it? and second, Does it send us back to our Christian work in a more fit condition than it found us?

In the light of these two questions the matter becomes personal and practical. It is lifted out of the region of casuistry into that of Christian principle. You may not be able always to say that any amusement is sinful, for that you cannot prove. Sin is the transgression of the law, and there may be no law expressly forbidding it. It would be foolish to manufacture sins when there are already so many, and a holy life is so uncommon with things as they are. Moreover, you cannot always take refuge in the allegation that a thing is worldly, for then you may be asked what the precise difference is between it and some other amusement, which you have already admitted to be allowable. In order to escape from this hope-



less entanglement it is better that you should take up a simpler, and yet a perfectly reasonable and decisively Christian attitude. This can be readily done by asking yourself the above two questions before entering upon any suspicious or debatable amusement.

Whatever hinders communion with Christ from moment to moment hinders also the effectiveness of Christian service. The poet Schiller was never weary of preaching that the fineness of a man's moral sensibilities should protect him from falling into many sins. The very smell of a gin-shop should be too much for sensitive nostrils. The ox being driven to the slaughter-house scents his coming doom ere he stumbles over the threshold, but the man does not. A Christian should be very much more sensitive than a man of the world to what is low and degrading in popular places of resort. The manifest character of the company that is to be met with in these should awaken his scruples. The very idea of carrying Jesus with him into such haunts, and into the midst of these demoralising associations, should be revolting to his moral sense. It should need no superfine network of reasons to persuade him that these things are not for him.

At the same time, it will be a sufficient answer when a worldly man or woman asks you why you

do not join in this or that amusement, to say that your indulgence in it would take away something of your relish for higher things. They will probably not appreciate your objection, but they may respect your consistency. At all events it ought to be for you a good enough reason for refusing to enter into a compromising relation to amusements, to say that they unfit you for the work you are endeavouring to do for the Master. When recreations consume, instead of increasing our vitality, when they produce an unfavourable condition of heart for living the higher life, they should be dropped without hesitation. Their justification to the earnest mind is that they restore the jaded powers and reanimate the waning energies. If they fail to do this, they have lost all claim to be included among the healthful and elevating elements in a Christian's life. They are not in harmony with the mind of Christ; they do not help us in the endeavour to be like Him.

The constant reference to the effect of amusements upon the inward life also shows that what may be right for one may be wrong for another. We saw that the life of God within the soul is not full-fledged at its beginning. It needs to grow. The law is "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Therefore, the tender shoot of a new reverence for divine things must be

protected and sheltered when it first appears above the soil of the heart. In the young it can be more easily harmed than at a later and more mature stage of development. Consequently, some may find it not hurtful to their growth in grace to indulge in recreation which would stunt and wither the weaker spiritual life of others.

This principle is capable of application in other directions. It reminds us that while we can scarcely be too careful and severe in judging ourselves, we must not be forward in judging others by the same standards. To his own Master he stands or falls. There is danger of the worldly spirit finding an entrance into our hearts in unexpected ways, so that while we are prone to accuse a brother of the sin of worldliness, we may be under the dominion of an equally objectionable spirit ourselves. If we are in difficulty or doubt as to the things that are really hindering us, let us bring them into touch with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. You may remember the narrative in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which tells how, upon suspicions being awakened, that Satan was lurking somewhere in the garden of Eden, two angels set out to search for him. They found a toad lying near the ear of the sleeping Eve, and whispering evil fancies into her ingenuous heart. The angel Ithuriel touched the

toad with his spear, and up there rose, in all the majesty of his fallen greatness, the father of evil himself.

For no falsehood can endure  
Touch of celestial temper, but returns  
Of force to its own likeness.

*Paradise Lost*, Bk. iv. ll. 811-813.

If we can thus have the help of the Holy Spirit in detecting our hindrances, we shall discover, by His light, the forces of evil in their hideous proportions, and by His might also be delivered from them.

We have spoken of unbelief and unfaithfulness as the two great sources from which our hindrances come. Under the latter head we have only dealt with the Christian's relation to recreation, but that is a subject of so much practical interest in this connection that it may well stand as typical of all forms of unfaithfulness that hinder the increase of the Spirit in Christian service. Moreover, we have striven to lay down principles capable of wider, if not universal application to all sins that hinder service, and have their origin in conscious or unconscious unfaithfulness to the gift of the Spirit already possessed. Increase of Spiritual power comes naturally from faithfulness in its use. We cannot be living fruitfully unto righteousness, except in proportion as we are dying

daily unto sin. Our sins and the Holy Spirit cannot live together in our hearts without our work suffering. Grace must expel sin before the King can enter in to reign, Whose right it is ; and with His help we shall be enabled to get rid of the things which prevent us from being successful in the true meaning of that much-abused word.

III. We have probably spoken at sufficient length of unfaithfulness, but there may be faithfulness in form and unreality in spirit. Worldliness leaves us without any living relations to an unseen and eternal Master in heaven. But we are born to serve, and if we do not find a master in Christ we find one in self. The apostle Paul could say, "For me to live is Christ." If the average man in this Christian land were to speak with equal frankness and truth, his declaration of allegiance would be : "For me to live is self"—a tyrant whom thousands serve with a zeal and efficiency which puts to shame the poorer efforts of many Christians in things divine. All the vices and sins are in one aspect but different manifestations of the spirit of self rising in rebellion against the reign of Christ in and over us. They are enormous exaggerations of self, whatever else they may be, and in this direction danger and spiritual death lie. Hence in the concluding section of this lecture on hindrances we speak of that

unreality in service, which more and more makes it impossible to transmit to others, in any form, the blessing which we ourselves have received.

This third and last group of hindrances interferes with the free communication of God's grace by us to others. Whatever in us interferes with the straight and direct line of sympathy between God and those for whom we are working may be ranged under this part of our subject. We can only, however, refer to two things as thus injuriously operative, namely, self-pleasing and self-seeking.

One of the great sources of weakness, unhappiness and inefficiency in work for Christ, is to be found in that spirit of self-pleasing, which is so natural to us all. When we are considering what has to be done we are unduly influenced by considerations of personal comfort or convenience in the doing of it. If we range for a moment over the whole horizon of human need and misery we are moved by the sights that meet our eye and appeal to our hearts. We have an impulse to plunge into what is most necessary. The clamant wants of our fellow-men overmaster us. But, alas! whenever we come to make the practical arrangements for relief, we choose those which are most easy and pleasant to ourselves, rather than profitable to them. In planning measures or



laying out lines of saving effort we give too large a place to our tastes or our inclinations or our habits, without going back upon the previous question whether these are all that they ought to be. At other times, when we are actively engaged in Christian work, and have been recognised as helpers in hard duties and cheerless tasks, we have been tempted to leave undone, or to hand over to others certain things that make a more than ordinary demand upon our spirit of self-sacrifice. It is also not so much what is necessary for men or pleasing to God that determines the measure of our effort and the direction in which it is made, as the degree of pleasantness or unpleasantness to ourselves which it promises to bring with it. This is making more of our own ease than of our duty to God and man. It is putting our arbitrary opinion or desire above that which conscience, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, declares to be the will of God for us.

To this self-pleasing we are all sorely tempted, and too often we yield to the temptation. Reason and conscience and the Holy Spirit are defied. The new heart, the life of faith, the in-dwelling Christ prove insufficient motives to the denial of self. For an earthly interest or worldly gain, men deny themselves without murmuring, and without regret ; but in the service of God, and for

the ends of His kingdom few are prepared steadfastly to tread the narrow but ever-ascending path to the unfading crown and the thousandfold acclamations of heaven. The constraining love of Christ is too weak and too fitful in its action in many to produce steady, self-denying service.

This spirit of self-pleasing is one of the earliest symptoms of declining faith and decreasing love. It marks a lessening interest in our work, and a diminishing attachment to our Master; for love delights to prove itself and its vitality by giving up not its activities, but the selfishness which would hinder them. We think little of the friendship of a man which prompts him only to do easy, self-pleasing things in token of good-will. If he limits himself to what is most in harmony with his own convenience, instead of that which is most friendly and loving to us, we may with good reason doubt the genuineness or value of such an attachment.

The other hindrance we shall only mention. We have to discuss it more fully in the next lecture. It is self-seeking. Sometimes we are tempted to serve ourselves in serving God, to seek our own ends while professing to seek His.

Self-seeking is never so out of place as in God's service. It is a mean and despicable heart, the desires of which are always revolving round

its own poor self. It is ignoble and petty to begin with self and end with self. If every Christian life must set out from itself and its own salvation as a centre, it should not end there. Our aspirations and efforts should be like the windings of a spiral circle, which, while they continually go out from self, rise on each occasion higher and higher and end by carrying many others upwards with us to God. But in the self-seeking life we put our own glory above God's, our own trivial interests above His, the glorification of self above the salvation of souls. Again, we say, nowhere else is this so painful and humiliating. To find two such incompatible things conjoined in a professedly Christian heart! How shameful and wicked to wrap up a mean motive like this in the great purpose of God! How unseemly that the work which brought Christ into the world should be made use of to minister to our vanity or personal ambition! In other callings men do not disclaim the motive of selfish gain, but in this we speak and act as if all were done for the greater glory of God and the higher good of men. Surely every honourable man—not to say every Christian worker—must shrink from such a perversion of truth, such a desecration of the holiest and best, as is involved in making the gospel of Christ a stalking-horse for his own selfishness.

X

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S REWARDS IN  
CHRISTIAN SERVICE



## X

### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S REWARDS IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Happy, if full of days—but happier far  
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,  
Sick of the service of a world that feeds  
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,  
We can escape from custom's idiot sway,  
To serve the sovereign we were born to obey.

COWPER.

SOME literary men and thinkers object to the mere mention of rewards in connection with Christian service. They declare that we ought to serve God and man without hankering after hire. They who make future requital an integral part of religious faith are said to be guilty of setting the religious life upon a selfish basis. No really good man, they maintain, should need the prospect of being rewarded for his well-doing, and no honest man can accept of it if it be offered. When he does so he becomes a hireling—a degenerate creature—bribed by a lie to serve the



interests of the truth. They assert that if there be such a thing as Christian service, then like virtue, it should be its own reward.

You will have difficulty in recognising your own portrait in this picture of the Christian worker. In a caricature there is usually some resemblance to the original, but here there is none. Your motive is falsified, your principles travestied. Probably you do not expect real sympathy in your work from these writers, but you cannot see why they should be so hard and bitter in judging you. They profess to take up this attitude in the interests of a pure and high morality. We shall find reason to dispute their contention. But you claim to be working with the Holy Spirit, and to have Him working with you, and therefore your standard of purity in motive ought to be higher than theirs. If *they* criticise your moral integrity in the name of a theory, *you* serve One Who searches you in the light of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the creative source of moral and spiritual life in us. His work is always to produce spirituality and holiness in men. Consequently you can welcome the keenest scrutiny of your motives as Christian workers, knowing that you are already subject to inspection by eyes too pure to behold iniquity.

There are others at the opposite pole of belief

who think it inconsistent with the evangelical faith, and savouring of Romanism, to cherish definite hopes of reward in heaven for service upon earth. They feel that at best they are utterly unprofitable servants, and that any notion of their having claims upon God for reward is presumptuous and untrue. So that, while the Roman Catholic hugs to his heart the belief in future rewards, the evangelical scarcely gets all the good from it that he might. A little attention, therefore, to the subject of the Holy Spirit's rewards in Christian service may be appropriate and profitable. If we can dispel some of the obscurity which rests upon it in many minds our pains will not be lost. You will then be able to extract for yourselves from Scripture more of the inspiration and impulse for service, of which it is full.

Let us consider in outline the *nature, range,* and *relevancy* of the rewards with which the Holy Spirit encourages us in Christian service, bearing in mind the above objections from the side of Romanism and Rationalism.

*I. The Nature of the Holy Spirit's Rewards in Service.*

We begin with the cold-blooded purists who warn working Christians in severe terms of their danger from the taint of selfishness. We are at

one with them in their avowed aim. We wish above all things to be pure in heart and disinterested in service. We adopt as our own the maxim that Christian service—like virtue—is its own reward. We have frequently said something like this. We have spoken with almost wearisome iteration of the unique relation in which service places us to God, as fellow-labourers with Him. We have not failed to set before you its blessedness for self and fruitfulness for others, and we do not hesitate to affirm that in spite of all the difficulties and discouragements, the Christian use of life would be the wisest even were there no rewards hereafter.

We are prepared to admit much more in the same strain, but we have to remind you that if Christian service is self-rewarding it does not therefore follow that there is no other reward. Enlarge the scope of the service, enrich its contents to the utmost, make it out to be the biggest and best thing in human life, but in doing this you are only increasing the probability that it will have eternal as well as temporal rewards.

If you still deny this, then your denial must rest upon one or other of two grounds—either that there can be no such reward, or that it is unnecessary. Let us look for a moment at each of these positions in turn.

The first is that Christian service has no other reward than the approval of our own conscience because anything else is either inconceivable or impossible.

We refuse to accept this view. It puts conscience in the place of God, and we know from experience what that may mean. Religion will come to have the same subjective basis. But our consciences are often very imperfectly enlightened as to our duty to God and our fellow-men. They need to be educated into holiness and spirituality by the Holy Spirit and Revelation through the agency of social and religious institutions. Conscience is therefore quite unsuitable for the work which would devolve upon it in the case supposed. The services we require from ourselves in its name would gradually cease to be either very exacting or very impartial. An easy religion would be the order of the day, and self-pleasing the rule of the religious life. Our self-love opens up the way for self-deception, and if there be no other judgment to reckon with, we are in danger of being bribed by the spirit of self to the detriment of all high-souled devotion and duty. We appeal, therefore, from judgment by self to judgment by God. The Great White Throne looms up before the soul as the symbol of a government stainlessly pure and splendidly

righteous, with Christ as the final arbiter of all our destinies.

But even conscience by itself supports the principle that reward follows service. In Kant's view, it is part of the very essence of the moral nature that, in a universe where God is supreme, happiness shall ultimately be united with holiness, good accruing to the good and evil to the evil. When it does not so fall out in experience, our consciences protest and demand an eternal sphere where moral worth shall be mated with blessedness.

Whatever may be the opinion of theoretic moralists, there can be no doubt that the Bible everywhere gives us glimpses of an impending judgment by which wrongs shall be righted and injustice redressed. Righteousness also shall be vindicated, and the processes of judgment which have been going on throughout all the ages of human history will be unveiled. The record written in the book of God's remembrance and in the very tissues of our being will then be read, the verdict declared, and there will naturally follow the selection of some for reward and the rejection of others. Such a retribution is not arbitrary, but holy and true. It springs from the good or evil deeds which have been done in this life. We may even say that reward is contained

in germ in service, as the fruit is hidden in the seed. What the last judgment does is to make evident to others, as well as to the doer, that which was implicit in the spirit of the life lived in the flesh.

If it be said that the highest laws of the moral life forbid the hope of reward as a motive for action because it ministers to our sensuous pleasure, we have to say that this idea is inadmissible in connection with Christian service. The conditions under which it is carried on are hostile to anything like selfish indulgence or mere hunting for pleasurable sensations. Inwardly, the Christian worker is subjected, through the Holy Spirit's indwelling, to repeated demands for confession of sin and penitent abjuring of it. It is not the rounded ripeness of the natural life, but the rugged brokenness of the spiritual, that makes genuine Christian service a possibility. Frequent denial of self is called for, and the perfection aimed at is not earthly but heavenly. No doubt in the Old Testament, as in Aristotle, worldly good frequently forms a part of the promised reward, but only when it is regarded as a token of the Divine presence and blessing. In itself it is not an essential constituent of the highest good. In the New Testament this partial and limited view is supplemented by the doctrine that we must



through much tribulation enter the kingdom. But at the same time we are assured that all things work together for good to them that love God and are the called according to His purpose. This shows that union with the Highest One is the highest good and a sufficient reward. All the rest is supplementary. The reward therefore is one that does not appeal primarily to the senses. It is spiritual.

Moreover, it is not made dependent upon the service so much as upon the spirit in which it is rendered. He who thinks of self in the first place is expressly stated to have received his reward. The man who has God in his heart and acts with a view to the interests of His kingdom can alone hope for recompense in the heavenly land. Even *his* reward is given in the form of a personal participation in the Divine character and a realisation of the Divine purpose. It is not the attainment of any private ends of his own. Besides this, it is recognised that the work done by him is likely to be imperfect in quality and disappointing in quantity; but, if the Holy Spirit be in it, the incompleteness does not prevent the bestowal of reward. The objection, therefore, that reward is incompatible with the highest morality falls to the ground when the reward is spiritual.

But the notion of reward may be discarded on

the other ground that it is unnecessary to the worker.

Christian service is happily more and more preached as a duty incumbent upon all. But we have to remember that it is also a privilege, and our highest privilege: more of good or evil will come to us through our relation to it than through all the other things in which we are interested.

But it is made plain in Scripture that such a life involves pain if not persecution, sacrifice of ambitions dear to the natural man if not surrender of worldly goods. We may not have to give our back to the smiter, but we ought to bear the burdens of the brethren. We have to face the storm, and fight the world, the flesh, and the devil. In short, we shoulder our cross and follow Jesus.

Do we need encouragement in this course? Have we no contrary feelings to overcome? Have we no natural aversions to beat down? Are we angels and not men? Though Christians, we live in a world which tries us. We have many troublesome and sinful affinities with it. Can we assume, then, that we do not need the rewards which the Holy Spirit offers to sustain and encourage us in service?

If we look at other and less difficult spheres of service, the analogy does not bear out this view.

Those who are charged with the government and education of their fellows find it necessary to hold out prizes or rewards in order to secure patience under trial and perseverance in the midst of obstacles. Human nature will need to be turned upside down before this practice can be given up. In the season of youth the rewards of middle life are dangled before the eyes to induce men to deny themselves in things that interfere with efficiency. The same thing continues until the close of the active period of existence.

If that be true of worldly work, is it not much more true of spiritual? The toils and sacrifices demanded in it are in some respects more arduous because the life is pitched at a higher level and runs along higher planes of effort. Consequently the strain upon the will is often greater.

But there are also higher and more enduring rewards, and it is good occasionally to dwell upon them. The God in whose hands are the good things of the earth and the glories of heaven does not fail His people. He is kind and generous. He is the most benevolent of all beings. His name is Love. His Son is Jesus. His rewards are like Himself, and worthy of all praise. They may not be so immediate as those of the world. But if we take a longer period of time into our view and bring the future into connection with the

present, the rewards of religion will far outshine those of the world.

If the Gospel withdrew from men's hearts all hopes of winning blessing for themselves here and hereafter, it would be depriving itself of one of the strongest motives for faithful and constant service. The hopes and fears as well as the faith and sense of justice implanted in us by our Creator, rise up in revolt against the cold-blooded view of those purists who would try to lift service above all relation to future reward. The whole heart of man joins with those other powers of his nature in opposition to this view, which would rob the Christian life of its richest inspiration. Away, then, with this nightmare of a contracted heart ! Earth's beauty fades, its wealth vanishes, its pleasures die, but the joys of heaven will be found to abide for ever.

Here some of you may say, Is not Christianity the foe of selfishness in all its forms, whether coarse or refined ? Does it not condemn unsparingly the spirit of self-seeking in religion ?

That is absolutely true. But it does not kill the heart ; it only seeks to change it and make it spiritual and holy. So in rooting out selfishness it destroys altogether the soil in which it grew, but it does not leave the Christian without a heart. It fashions his heart anew in the likeness of Christ.

He trusts more, loves more, sorrows more, and rejoices more than he did in his unregenerate state. But the objects which excite in him these passions and emotions are changed. Before, they were natural or sinful ; now, they are increasingly spiritual and holy. Among these objects are the life eternal—the life with God in it and with all that is most desired by the holy and spiritual heart.

In bringing to a close our consideration of the nature of the Holy Spirit's rewards, we are as free as ever to assert their true character and attraction for us.

If there is an influence which works for the exaltation of conscience in service and for the preservation of our inner life from all motives that are degrading or corrupting, it is that of the Holy Spirit. As Christ drove out the money-changers and sacrilegious mercenaries from the Temple, so He strives to banish all that is impure or unworthy from our hearts. Christ did not shed His blood on Calvary to retain in His service a race of hirelings. He seeks service that is free and filial—from sons serving for love, not from slaves slaving for hire. We work *from* life, not *for* life ; from gratitude, not from greed ; from an overwhelming desire for God's glory and the highest good of men—not from the passion to glorify ourselves or enjoy ourselves.

Nevertheless when a martyr dies for Christ, it is surely a desecration to speak of his dying for the reward which faithfulness brings. If some of you were going to take care of poor, miserable, wounded soldiers lying in a plague-stricken hospital, it would surely be a terrible misconstruction of your motives to say that you undertook this loathsome office with the selfish prospect of enjoying the pleasure which Christ's approval entails. What is there more disinterested than the passion to help in Christ's name the children of suffering, or to succour the tempted? Can any one describe such service as animated by an unworthy hope of recompense? A Christian abiding in the love of God and working in fellowship with the Holy Spirit will certainly not feed his fancy with pictures of selfish reward in the future. As little will he be able to refrain from momentarily throwing his heart into the unseen world and drawing from it elements of strength for service in the present. If this be derided or deprecated as selfish, then the purest springs of motive in a regenerated heart must be pronounced incurably corrupt. Is it not part of our dependent nature that we are not sufficient of ourselves for service without thinking sometimes of the remunerating power of God? Can we blame the Christian worker who encourages himself in the service of



Christ with the thought of coming reward? Do not imagine that this faith can be cut out of the heart which loves Christ and longs to be where He is.

## II. *The Range of the Holy Spirit's Rewards.*

Some of you will be asking, How is the doctrine of future rewards for present service reconcilable with the belief that all that comes to us, or will come to us, is of grace and not of merit? Does it not look as if these rewards were won by our own deeds? Has this suspicion been entering your minds while we were speaking?

Our working is not the efficient cause of their bestowal, but the Holy Spirit's working in and through us. It is grace that made Christian service first possible to us. It is by the Holy Spirit's continued impartation of spiritual strength that we are sustained in it. So we start in a state of grace.

Thereafter the possibility of rewards arises out of the fact that in the future state there are degrees of glory; all are fully happy, but the capacity to receive happiness is not equally developed in all. Consequently there are differences between Christians in heaven. Our Saviour Himself distinguished between the reward of a righteous man and the reward of a prophet

(St. Matthew x. 41), and He promised to His apostles positions of special honour. No doubt these varieties of reward are connected with the sovereign grace of God ; but they are also not independent of the use we make here of our powers and opportunities. Some have more gifts or grace, but they have also greater responsibility for their use. With what measure of faithfulness we measure, it will be measured to us again (*cf.* St. Matthew vii. 2).

Furthermore, God's requital of our services is seen to be not of merit but purely of grace when we look at the disproportion between the two. He is forward to acknowledge His indebtedness to us. He delights to set His seal of approval upon the little that we do. He is even grateful for our sympathy with His purposes of grace in the world, and he makes the most of every little act which tends to their realisation. Hence, while on earth, He made His disciples many sincere promises of reward. What shape do you think these promises took? Why, they held out hopes of a reward a hundredfold greater than the service done. There was no proportion between them. He valued their sacrifices far more highly than they could ever, in their most sanguine moments, dream of doing themselves. For boats and nets, He promised thrones and sceptres. For every form of

worldly loss, they were to have an appropriate indemnity and spiritual gain. The fruits would in every instance be many times greater than the seed sown.

Now surely the vainest man that ever lived could not believe that he had really earned for himself rewards bestowed on so splendid a scale. The very magnitude of the blessings conferred, puts them for ever out of the category of payments by God for work done. Nay, further, it humbles us to think of such overflowing kindness.

These rewards are so overwhelming in their greatness, that it is only their spiritual character which prevents them from injuring the recipients. If in any way they ministered to self-esteem or increased self-centredness they would not be the help they are. It was the salvation of the disciples that the thrones promised were spiritual—not worldly. If they had been made literally governors of provinces in Palestine, they would have been ruined by a kind of promotion for which they were in many ways unfitted. No doubt, in ruling over the spiritual Israel, they mounted into positions far higher than those of any earthly prince. They were sovereigns in the realm of the Spirit; and their writings, as revealing the mind of the Master, are fast becoming the spiritual statute-book of the world.

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### III. *The Relevancy of the Holy Spirit's Rewards.*

Christ's rewards were made not only to the disciples ; they are offered to all who fulfil the conditions upon which they can be received. They apply to workers at home and abroad ; to those who bury themselves among the unfortunate denizens of the city slums, as well as to those who have exiled themselves from their native land to carry the Gospel to heathen peoples. Every sacrifice made for the sake of Christ, every service rendered to His cause, will be recognised and rewarded upon the same principle applied to the immediate disciples of Christ. We may not literally receive a hundred times what we give up for Jesus' sake, because that might be inconsistent with our true welfare or not be a real reward. For example, if we have alienated friends by our devotion to Christ, we may not literally receive a hundred friends for each of those we have lost ; but the promise is as amply fulfilled. We shall find human hearts who love the Redeemer opening up to us in wonderful ways in proportion as we surrender ourselves completely to Christ. We have, even in this world, marvellous compensations for all the losses that visit us in fulfilling the behests of the Saviour.

The relevancy of reward to service will be more

manifest in heaven. There will be no dead level of reward, because there is no mechanical equality of service. The reward is always proportional and appropriate. The degrees of happiness in heaven are graduated according to our degrees of usefulness upon earth. Those in high service are invited to go higher. Success in the smaller sphere is rewarded with promotion to more difficult and honourable, as well as larger, departments of service.

Again, though service in heaven will be different from what it is here in all its conditions, yet it is not in any way suspended. It enters upon new phases and takes on new developments.

At last we shall have reached a service of Christ which is in every sense its own reward. Unwelcome duties and exhausting activities are things of the past. Here we serve an unseen Master; there we shall see Him. Now we have Him present with us by faith; then we shall be present to Him in ways that are impossible to us here. We shall see Him in all the divine beauty of His glorified body. We may have intimate, enlarged, and frequent intercourse with Him. If we have ever known what it is to have the closest social fellowship with a friend whose mind and heart are greater and better than our own, what must it be to be with Jesus!

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But our fitness to enter upon Christian service in heaven, with its manifold and diverse rewards, will depend upon the motives which animate us in service here. If we are merely giving an outlet to our instincts of activity or to the restless vital energy within us, if we are simply using up in this way the leisure that lies heavily upon our hands, we shall have our reward here, but not hereafter. Even the desire to be useful is not enough. Still less must we work merely because others whom we know happen to be engaged in it, or because it is respectable and fashionable in our circle. First give yourself unconditionally to Christ in full and glad surrender, and then do everything for His glory and the coming of His kingdom. Don't attempt to work *for* salvation, but *from* it. Then your motives will be such as the Holy Spirit can bless and use.





XI

THE RELATION BETWEEN SPIRITUAL  
LIFE AND SERVICE



## XI

### THE RELATION BETWEEN SPIRITUAL LIFE AND SERVICE

Thou . . . workest now as Thou didst then—  
Feeding the faint divine in humble men.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

BEFORE dealing with the relation between spiritual life and service by way of postscript to these lectures, we had better make plain what we mean by each of the terms taken separately.

Service we have interpreted in the Christian sense as work done for the greater glory of God, under co-operation of His Spirit, and for the redemption of men. No act is a part of Christian service unless the Holy Spirit can use it for the purposes of the Gospel. In so far as we are willing and ready to be used by Him, we become possessed of His power. He works through us upon others, and we enter upon a kind and order of service which is not open to unregenerate men. The works we do are not our own, but the works

of Him that sent us. The principles we are moved by, and the ends we are seeking to accomplish, are not our own, but the Master's. Others may use their powers and opportunities in ways that are not helpful to men, but the issue of activities that are inspired and guided by the Spirit must be a blessing to men. In proportion as we allow ourselves to be used by the Spirit for these high ends, we are fellow-labourers with Christ, and assist in His work of saving and sanctifying men.

If this be Christian service, as we have understood it in these lectures, what is the spiritual life to which it is related? We must explain this a little more fully, because we have not had occasion to refer directly to it. We must try to answer the question, In what does spiritual life consist?

The easiest way of entering upon an explanation may be to begin by pointing out what it is not. There are many well-meaning people who imagine that they are spiritually alive because they are at times subject to serious and earnest impressions. They may have been moved by touching appeals from the pulpit, or by the warnings of God's providence, or by the loss of some one near and dear to them. They are sorely troubled for a time. The spiritual and eternal world seems to overshadow them. Their hearts are overawed.

The fountain of tears is opened and the hardness of their heart is melted away. But the influence is only on the surface, or very partial and transitory in its range. It does not stir the deepest life of the soul. It does not command and control the whole of the inner nature, and bring it unconditionally into subjection to God in Christ. There is no new beginning made. There is no entrance upon a career of holy living; no permanent and continuous state of the heart at all, but only fluctuating emotions of hope and fear. The stagnant waters of the heart have been troubled by these angels of blessing, but they have not been changed into a living spring having its source in the Holy Spirit's agency. The relation to God and their own evil past has not been radically altered or reversed. They are still living for self and the world, rather than for Christ. Many have had such experiences before; they have continued to feel them for a time, and have done good works under their influence, but soon they have lapsed into the old life, and have remained unquickened and unrenewed. Even a limb which has been paralysed can be stimulated into convulsive activity by a few electric shocks being administered to it, but that is not restoration of life. There must be circulation of fresh blood from the heart through all the veins and arteries before there can be



a permanent renewal of life within it. So it is with the soul. You may be subject to motions and impulses of the Holy Spirit for many years, but unless these be yielded to, accepted, and obeyed, there can be no new spiritual birth, and no fresh spring of spiritual life.

Nor, again, can any one say that the Christian life consists essentially in attending church and waiting upon the means of grace. These acts lie very close to the healthy growth of the new life once it is begun, but they are not to be confounded with that life itself. A tree, if it is to live, needs the dew and the rain and the sunshine. Its roots need to draw nourishment from the soil, as well as from the atmosphere, but its life cannot be identified with any or all of these.

What is spiritual life, then? In its seat and source it is a mystery. It is the secret of our strength, the nerve of our will, the pulse of our affection, and yet we do not know what it is in itself other than the life of God within the soul of man.

All life shows itself by bringing us into relationship with something outside of ourselves. The life of the body is sustained and nourished and developed by taking into it bread, and water, and air. In like manner the life of our mind is fostered and stimulated by receiving and domesticating the

thoughts of others. The life of the affections is fed by love of others. What, then, is the life of the Spirit? It is a life fed by communion with God.

Speaking broadly, it is our living in Christ, and Christ living in us. In our Saviour's own simple and beautiful language we are to abide in Him as the branch abides in the vine. If we have been first vitally united to Him by a living and personal faith, we must abide in Him by the same means. It is a life of faith—a life resting in the assured confidence that He who wrought out for us our acceptance with God will also work in us by His Spirit whatever is necessary for our fuller sanctification. This is the means by which the new life is conveyed into our hearts, this simple child-like trust that He who lived and died for us will also bless us with His sanctifying grace. It is this yielding up of our souls to Him, and placing them in His hands, which makes the life flow from Him to us.

But there is another side to the Christian life. We have not only to abide in Christ, we have to let Him abide in us. We have to take heed that the way between our souls and Him is kept ever open for communications of His Spirit. "I in you, as well as you in Me." This is the double relation of the believer to Christ. We have now

come upon the secret of what spiritual life really is. It is the life of Christ in us; as the sap circulates in the branch, but comes from the vine, so the sap of grace must move freely through our souls, if we are to be in possession of the light, and life, and love which are in Christ. No wonder that we could not find this life in ordinances or in anything so outward. It is the innermost marrow of the soul's experiences. It is the grace that works inwardly and produces in us those fruits of the Spirit which are not religious activities, however intense or fervent, but gracious dispositions, such as joy, peace, righteousness, and love. Here we have come upon the real life of the Christian. Here is a sphere where the Spirit lives and works, and where all Christian service worthy of the name originates.

This life is not that which is natural to man. Though it be found working in the heart of the renewed, yet it does not come from the heart. It comes from the indwelling Christ, and is therefore supernatural in its sources and character. We can understand how many natural virtues and graces are produced by training the reason and conscience under human and divine authorities, but the peculiarly Christian graces—meekness, self-denial, self-sacrifice, humility, and spiritual love, as well as many others—are the effects of a power

above nature. They are not produced by natural causes. They came into prominence with Jesus Christ as law for all, and they became the permanent possession of His Church by the gift of His Spirit at Pentecost. They who have these graces abiding within them, and working through them, and they only, are living the Christian life. It is the relation of this life to service which we have now to consider.

The first thing which naturally occurs to any one to say is that to live such a life among men is surely to render them a service unique in its kind and far-reaching in its power. Does it seem strange that it should be so? We can understand how he who engages in voluntary activity for the good of men should act upon them with easily recognisable results. But does a holy life find similar effect in other hearts than our own? Has it a power, a sanctified energy which God can use for the accomplishment of His purposes in the world? Yes. Nothing could be more superficial and unwarranted than to believe that we only act upon others when we will it. Besides our words and deeds, there is another influence constantly going out from our characters. There is a power in a true life to lead souls to Christ. There is a ministry of silence as well as of speech. There is a ministry of character as well as of work. A life

may be wanting in words, and yet full of power from the Spirit within. We begin therefore to work for Christ as soon as we begin to live in Him and He in us. It is not for us to say which is the more helpful, the active or the contemplative life, in advancing His kingdom. But we know that to live for Christ must be to serve Him.

We see, then, that whenever we think of devoting ourselves to the service of God and our fellow-men, we are immediately thrown back upon our own spiritual life. We have to sanctify ourselves that they also may be sanctified. If there be this holiness within, an influence will go out from us to others. They will feel it and respond to it, and it is therefore important for the Christian worker to preserve and increase in himself the subtle power for service which flows from the life of God in the soul. As a silent force working quietly and gently, it may not appear worthy of comparison with that which is exerted by activities which are more meteor-like and forcible. But this will be a profound misapprehension. It is not always the noisiest forces which do the most work, not the storm of thunder and lightning that exerts most power to heal or revive, but peaceable influences like the dawn of the morning light, which brings warmth and renewal to the earth.

Perhaps the influence which radiates from a holy character does more for the highest good and blessing of others than activities which by their very multiplicity are apt to be distracting and fruitless.

Be careful, then, by a consistent life, to increase the efficiency of your service. Ask yourselves in regard to any action what will be its effect upon those whom you desire to lead to Christ. In Proverbs vi. 13, it is said that a wicked man speaketh with his feet; that is to say, his life tells which way he is going. So the Christian worker should plainly indicate by his manner of life whom he serves. The mightiest power for service can only be found in a character which is above all suspicion. A Christian man or woman who represents Christ before the world must be genuine all through. In becoming a Christian it is not enough to have changed the flag, there must be a change of character and a growing resemblance to Christ. There must be diligent watch over the habits and the dutiful performance of our work, if our power over others is to be perfected for service.

But how is the life to be kept fresh and strong for Christian service? In our day there are so many demands upon our labour, and so many opportunities for service, that we cannot do all we



want to do, or think ought to be done. Our life runs away in little things, as streams sometimes lose themselves in the sands. Our strength is wasted, our hearts sucked dry. How are we to get the personal power with God and man which goes with increasing holiness and self-devotion?

It seems to us clear that there must be a deepening and intensifying of the life before service. There must be a concentration of ourselves in the presence of God. And how is this to be accomplished? Only, it would appear, by having seasons of private devotion and devout study of the Scriptures when we are alone with God. In such times of retirement those waters are gathered which will flow forth in healing streams of grace to others. Deep down below the surface of the earth in rocky crevices the rains gather which are presently to burst forth in a spring that shall overflow all the neighbouring soil and fertilise it. These are the natural reservoirs where we can find the supplies which are life-giving to the plains and fields of the world. In like manner the deeper and holier life of the Christian will depend upon the stores of divine influence which are gathered up and treasured in those seasons of secret prayer.

We have ever to remember that the soul, though spiritually alive, is not alive of itself, and

needs frequent communication with the fountain of spiritual life in Christ through the Holy Spirit. There it first had its rise. Hence the Saviour's emphatic command that His followers should seek in private devotion the needed strength for service. He who lives in habitual communion with Him will find his words and work possessing a charm and a power which will be sought for in vain elsewhere. It will be recognised that the soul has been quickened and refreshed in solitary devotion before God.

Never was it more necessary to insist upon maintaining this high level of personal power for service. It is well known that the amount of Christian work requiring to be done has grown greatly with the gathering of the population into large cities. It is felt that methods of work and service suited to earlier eras and other social circumstances are not so serviceable now. Many of you are connected with one or several Christian societies in this city. In these you feel that your personal influence is taken up and strengthened, and that you can do more through them than without them. Your power for good is increased by combining with others who are like-minded with yourself. But there is a danger in the ease with which we allow the organisation to take the place of our own personal effort and influence.

If we can take the organised help and work through it and from it upon others it is well. But are we not all too ready to allow the work to be done for us? We ourselves then become Christian workers as it were by proxy.

If we allow any institution to come between us and the exertion of our own power in service we are forsaking the method of Christ. He worked in and through personal lives. Renewed men were to be His means of grace for the world, and the Spirit still works in and through those whom He has redeemed. The power of the Gospel lies in the men and women whom it seizes upon and inspires, and the power of the Church or any other institution in its fulness will consist of the manifold forces multiplied by union together. But we cannot substitute the outward power of any organisation for the intense and deep influence of men and women, the springs of whose personal life are found in God.

The life, then, must ever go before service. If there is to be really successful work for Christ, the worker must be thoroughly Christianised. He must be in his life and character all that he wishes others to become. Without sharing in this life he cannot have any just and true conception of the work that needs to be done. He will linger on the surface, or trifle with what is

not essential. No doubt, some will say, has not the truth preached, or work done, an effectiveness of itself apart from the character of the person who engages in it? Has it not been known that some have had the power to make the godly life attractive to others, though they knew it not themselves by experience? Have there not been men with natural gifts of sympathy and personal magnetism who have had a measure of success when the life was lacking? Have not preachers and evangelists prescribed successfully to others for diseases of which they were dying themselves? May not the truth of God be studied and mastered as men know the principles of music who have never sung a note correctly?

We cannot limit the working of God or deprive the truth of its native power, but we can say that if such men have been used from time to time to do subordinate work in the kingdom, it has been highly exceptional, and a fact upon which no principle for the guidance of others can be founded. It is absolutely certain that speaking from experience of the spiritual life is that which God blesses. All gifts of knowledge and utterance are as tinkling brass and a sounding cymbal without the life and love of God in the heart. When the words come after being baptized in the Spirit, they come with power. Only that which

flows from the heart can reach the heart. Truth flowing from the lips like water from a vessel can have no force, no power to convince. When it lives in the heart, breathes in the life, and embodies itself in the character, its power to win souls for Christ is infinitely increased. Earnest convictions find a way to the hearts of others by other media than the voice. There is a language of the life as well as of the lips. It is less liable to be misunderstood and more intelligible to all. If you act the truth, it will live.

No doubt life finds its true outlet in service. Service reacts upon life, and the discipline that comes from faithful and continued work for Christ is above all price. It makes the life sober, checks unnecessary waste of power, and gives permanence to impressions that might otherwise be fleeting. Moreover, it is only in a life of self-denying effort and consistent activity that the spirit that is in a man can manifest itself fully to himself or others. Only in work can we really express our deepest practical convictions of duty to God or our fellow-men. Actions reveal the secret and most real bent of the life.

THE END





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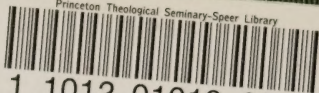
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